

THE

TRYAL

OF

THOMAS NEVIN, M. A.

Pastor of a Church, of the Presbyterian
Denomination, in *DOWN-PATRICK*,

BEFORE

The GENERAL SYNOD.

Which met at *Dungannon*, June 16. 1724.
and was continued, by several Adjourn-
ments, to the 26th of that Month :

CONTAINING

Mr. *Nevin's* Letter for which he was pro-
cess'd ; The Libel against him ; his Answer to it laid
before the Synod : their Proceedings on five Articles
of the Libel, particularly, their NEW INQUI-
SITORY Discipline on the 5th Article ; Reasons of
the Protestation of divers Worthy Ministers and Elders,
against their INQUISITORY and EXCLU-
SIVE Decisions ; with General Observations on the
whole Tryal.

faithfully collected from the Minutes of the Synod, and
other Authentic Vouchers, and published by the said

THOMAS NEVIN.

BELFAST :

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To the Congregation of PROTESTANT DIS-
SENTERS in DOWN-PATRICK,

I Lay before you, in the following Papers, a full and impartial Account of the Proceedings of the late General Synod in my Case. I am encouraged to this by the agreeable Success, which a brief Representation of them just upon my Return from that Tryal, which was equally Surprizing in its Rise and Issue, had with you. So that to a Man, you have continued under my Ministry, and generally express'd an entire Satisfaction with my Conduct, and shewn a more cordial Respect to me than Ever. I wou'd gladly take the most effectual Means to secure and strengthen your good Opinion, and shall always esteem it the more, that 'tis the Effect of Judgment, and flows from rational Motives, and not the meer Result of a blind vehement Affection. And therefore I have determin'd with myself, to give you the best Opportunity to consider this whole Affair, and to fix in your Minds the Principles, for which I suffer'd, and the Reasons, that determin'd me to the Part I acted. Thus shall you have always at hand the most convincing Arguments to preserve our present Peace, and to stop the Mouths of such as wou'd fain raise some Disturbance between you and me.

BUT however confident I might be of your Firmness without all this Pains, yet many other Advantages invite, nay a plain Necessity obliges me to lay open this Scene of Partial ty and Injustice; The Necessity of it

with Respect to myself, chiefly arises from the barbarous Method, that is taken to bury my Answer to the Libel in utter Oblivion, and the great Industry us'd by the Party to keep the Prejudice and Spirit of Detraction in full Strength against me. For the Clerk of the Synod, by whose Directions, and for what Reasons he can best tell, has entirely omitted to insert into the Minutes, which contain the Libel in full Length against me, any Part of my written Defence, which yet I was obliged to deliver into his Hands as a Record and necessary part of the Tryal. How unlike this is to the Proceedings of any Court, where any Shew of Justice is regarded, is a Point too manifest to need Proof! But how horrid the Injury of this Practice is, can only be conceived from a particular Knowledge of the Use the Synodical Minutes are designed for. They are not only engross'd as the lasting Records of the General Synod itself. But Copies of them are transmitted to all the Presbyteries in the North, to be publicly read in some one or other of their Meetings before the next General Synod, and to be kept as Records in each of them, that in Spite of Time and Chance, some of them may be preserved and handed down to future Ages. But in this particular Case, a more diffusive Method of spreading the Minutes has been fallen upon. For particular Persons were at the Expence of procuring Copies for their own Use, which they not only shew'd in all Companies, but have, without any Order indeed of Synod or Presbytery, taken care to have 'em read from the Pulpit. And when the Scandal is thus sent abroad, and the Libel without any Allay to it's Venom, so widely scattered, can it be thought too great Tendernefs of Reputation, to take this fair and open Method of vindicating myself from the Insults and Injuries of Calumny and Party-rage? But tho' it might be expected, that Time will cool their overheated Zeal, and Work off the present Ferment that

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The DEDICATION.

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many are in, so that they may come to judge truly of my Case at last ; nor am I afraid but that all these Scandals, wou'd vanish and fly away ; yet considering what Abuse and violent Resentment, several of my Brethren are expos'd unto for showing in my Cause, not so much a Favour to me, as a Regard to JUSTICE, and for speaking in the Tryal in such a Manner generally, as they might at another time have done without any Censure for one under violent Presumptions of the blackest Scandals ; Gratitude, and all the Sacred Ties of Friendship, do constrain me to make my Innocency appear in the speediest and most ample Manner. And how can this be done, but by setting before the World the whole Transaction ? Then every one, who will use his own Eyes and Understanding, will be able to form a Judgment, if any thing Heretical, or even a Ground of Suspicion appear'd against me. By this Means, the Testimonies of my being Orthodox in the Grand Point of our Saviour's Deity, that were offer'd to the Synod without my Desire and Privy, will be made as publick, as the groundless Jealousies and Fears of the Contrary have been. And sure when they are balanc'd one against the other, they must be extremely Partial, who won't readily acknowledge, that such plain, direct and solema Attestations of Innocence, must far outweigh any thing that has been alledged publicly, or mutter'd against me.

BUT I am indebted to the Steadiness of you my flock, for another strong Voucher of my Soundness and Integrity too. Your BEHAVIOUR on this Occasion is my Glory and my Triumph ; And it affords me the greatest Satisfaction, that I can produce such a substantial and unexceptionable Evidence in my Favour. For now I have you to bear Witness by your Firmness and inviolable Respect, that 'tis not possible for me to be an ARIAN, without being at the same

same Time a rank and thorough Hypocrite ; and if I were train'd up to, and harden'd by so long a Course of the vilest Dissimulation, it can't be reasonably thought likely, that, I wou'd have scrupled any Declaration the P A R T Y cou'd have form'd, tho' I neither believ'd it to be true, nor them to have any Right to make such a Demand of me. For if ever you had met with any thing, either in my Sermons or Conversation, that seem'd to border on that Dangerous Error, of Christ's being in his highest Capacity, no more than a Creature, made out of nothing, and that there was a Time when he was not, Let every one judge, if you wou'd have remain'd so closely attach'd to me, so fully persuaded of my Orthodoxy in this Point, that all the Clamors of some, and the confident Boasts of a particular Accuser, have never been able to raise the least Suspicion in the Breasts of any of you ? And could you have been so firmly settled in your Judgments on this Head, if in my publick Ministrations I had not frequently and fully open'd up my Sentiments of Christ's being Really and Truly God, I am free to leave to the unprejudic'd Part of Mankind. But farther I can appeal to many of you, not only for such a presumptive Evidence of my Orthodoxy: But for a direct and particular Confirmation of my having own'd upon several Occasions, that if I were convinc'd the Church had a Right to require my Assent to any Human Form of Words, I cou'd express my Sense and Belief of that D O C T R I N E in the very Words of our Confession, and which are the same with the Words of the first Article of the Establish'd Church, viz. that the Son is of one Substance, Power and Eternity with the Father. And I can also call upon you to attest, that at our Sacrament in May last, before there was any Talk of the following Affidavit or Apprehension of my Bretheren's being in this Rage

gainst me, I did in the most express and plainest Manner preach and assert the SUPREME DEITY of Christ, and of this the Rev'd Mr. Smith, who was present, is surely a Competent Judge and Witness. And I am now free to tell the World, that in my Way of Thinking, no less is the genuine Construction and Meaning of that Text, Rom. 9. 5.-----Christ came, who is God over all Blessed for ever. And so I presume the Party must at last own, that it was not for want of Orthodoxy I did not comply with their Demand; but only that I wou'd not betray the Rights of Men and Christians, and by a cowardly Submission countenance their Claim of an unrighteous Power.

IF this then be the very Truth of the Case, where is the mighty Crime in any of my Brethren's endeavouring to support their own Rules of proceeding against the exorbitant Claim of Power, which as a mighty Torrent was carrying all before it? An obstinate Silence might be taken for an Argument of Guilt, and be a plausible Ground of Triumph to the Party and their Adherents, as if nothing but a conscious Sense of Heterodoxy wou'd make me sit down contented with the Brand of Infamy they have endeavour'd to fix upon me. Thus shou'd all who seem'd to plead for Justice to me during the Tryal, or speak any way favourably of me since, ly open to Suspicion, and be pointed as the Friends of a Dangerous Heretic. If in the Event my Enemies are fallen into their own Snare, and in the same Net they hid privily, are their own Feet taken; so that instead of marking me out for one of unsound Principles, they are set up to be gaz'd at as a new Sett of INQUISITORS; This must be wholly imputed to their own Management, and is no way chargeable on this Representation of the Case, I have been obliged to make in my own Defence.

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AND instead of this being an Objection against laying open to the View of the World these strange Doings, I look upon it as one of the great Advantages to be reap'd from this Undertaking. For if a Matter that has made so much Noise, be left in the Uncertainty of common Fame, the Charge of Injustice might fall upon the whole Body of Dissenting Ministers, and such Iniquitous Proceedings be thought countenanced by the Presbyterian Model: But now the Blame is laid on those who deserve it; Thus it will appear to be the Fault of the Men, not of the Constitution: Since the best Scheme of Government may be abus'd, and since it will now be found, there is no more in this Matter, but that a Party have stretch'd their Power beyond their own establish'd Rules, and done what the more Judicious and Prudent in the Synod know to be contrary to Reason and Justice.

'TIS true, the best of Men thro' Passion and Inadvertency, may upon some Occasions fall into unjustifiable Measures, and it were hard to upbraid them too severely for such Oversights, when there is any Relenting, or a Prospect that they may soon be sensible of them. But 'tis to be fear'd, that without an open arraigning their Folly and Violence, no such thing can be expected from this Party. For their late Conduct in my Affair is, what they seem to have had much at heart, ever since the present Debates and Differences came in among us. At first they were somewhat modest and shy to set up Directly for such a Power, and they only aim'd at it by indirect and artful Means. They propos'd Voluntary Declarations and Subscriptions, and did not pretend to enforce these with Penalties and Censures. (But in Reality this was exercising this very Power, tho' in a secret but no less mischievous Way; for they knew such as won'd not comply, must fall under popular Jealousies and Clamor, and therefore the watch-

word

word was given, that such as wou'd not declare in their very Form, and in Obedience to them, were left to the People) But the Party encourag'd by the Readiness of many to execute the Penalties they were directed to, and the Odium of such Proceedings being pretty much worn off by the Numbers and Influence of those concerned in them, have formally taken this Power into their own Hands, and do now avow and claim it as their Right : And so from small and almost insensible Beginnings, has this Torrent of Power risen to its present Height ; and where it will stop, they must have a strange Opinion of their own Foresight, that will take upon 'em to ascertain ; if some Endeavours are not used to prevent this growing Evil. It is necessary to make some Stand against it ; and sure the proper Time is, when yet the Name of an Inquisition has not got above the Disgrace, it has been justly under among Protestants. If any time be lost, till Men are reconciled to it, as the only effectual Contrivance to crush the Brood of Errors and Heresies, that may be hatch'd in corrupt Minds, after they are admitted into a pure and undefiled Church (as by sufficient Vouchers adduc'd in the Reasons of the following Protestation, will appear to have been the very Rise of it among the Papists 'emselv'es) the Notion of such high Advantages might banish all that is frightful in it ; and in spite of Reason and the unaximous Consent of every other Presbyterian Church, it come to be extoll'd as a most useful Engine in the Hands of Wise and Orthodox Divines. And therefore lest a Delay shou'd be dangerous, it is most adviseable to attack it in its feeble Infant State, and before any more fall under its Weight and Mischief.

I scarce can imagine that the Prevalence of Party Views and Designs, has yet got such irresistible Force ; that the most Essential Principles of natural Equity and Justice must entirely fall before it. And that any of

X **The DEDICATION.**

tolerable Capacity, can be so blinded with Prejudice and Party Zeal, as not to be sensible that proceeding in the Case of alledged Offence without Witnesses, and by extorting Confessions from Men against themselves under the Form of regular Jurisdiction, is a very bad and mischievous Practise. If I can so impress Men with this, that every honest Mind, and all the Lovers of Peace and Truth, shall condemn the new and extraordinary Discipline, that has been tried upon me; and that as I have been the first, so I shall be the last Instance of this Kind among Dissenters in the North of Ireland; this I will regard as an abundant Recompence of all my Pains and Sufferings. And every one must acknowledge, such a View is a very sufficient Reason for exposing the Inquisitory Methods of issuing Scandal, which the Party thought fit to make their dernier Resort in this Tryal.

L E T none pretend that I hereby insinuate, that the Party have set up just such an Inquisition, as they have in some Popish Countries. Nor do I charge 'em with all the Instances of Cruelty, that the Papists are guilty of. But because a great Part of my Complaint turns on this, that the Party by the like Proceedings did all they cou'd to crush one who wou'd not by an open Submission recognize that Power in their Hands, I shall to prevent any Wrangling about the name of a thing, here lay down the Notion of it clearly. There are two ways of proceeding against Persons under an Accusation and Process. The one is, when the Offence a Person is charged with, are prov'd upon him by Witnesses, which is the only just Way, and that which is prescribed in the Word of God, and ought to have been taken in my Case: The other is, when NO Witnesses appear, or can so much as be pretended against a person; but he is required by the Dint of Authority to
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purge himself, if innocent, or accuse himself, if guilty; & his refusing to do so, shall be either taken for a Confession of Guilt, or made the Ground of punishing him for disobeying their Injunction. This Latter which is NOT by Proof, but by Inquiry of the person accused, or suspected, every one has agreed to call an Inquisition, and properly enough I presume; and this Course, I say, the Party took with me. How contrary the thing itself is to the plain Rules of Justice, and the Sense of Dissenters in every Age, will fully appear by the following Protestation, and the Reasons of it.

I don't dissemble, that it is in a great Measure for the Sake of that part of the Performance, that I have troubled the World with this Tryal. If I had not suffer'd in a Cause, which is of general Concern, I cou'd have easily have put up all the RESENTMENT the Party shew'd against me, when it had only noise, but no Damage or Execution with it among you my People. It wou'd be of such fatal Consequence, to let this Method of proceeding be once establish'd in the hands of the Party, that I hope the Ministers and Gentlemen who enter'd the Protestation, and drew up the Reasons of it, will pardon my publishing it to prevent so gre it an Evil. I do own it was a most agreeable Rest to me in such an unbeaten Path, where I was so much my own Company and Subject; But I am sure it will be as agreeable a Variety to the Reader, and especially I know it will be a Pleasure to you my Friends, to see that so many valuable Ministers and Elders have supported their Protestation against the Synod's Decisions with such clear and convincing Arguments from Scripture and Reason. And this must make it a greater Satisfaction both to you and me, to have the Minority and these Reasons on our Side, than to have had the Majority for us, and such Reasons against us. I

am not ignorant it will make the rest of the Performance look very poor and mean ; But if I have been the Occasion of forming such an Elaborate Piece, where a Point of such Moment is treated with great Strength of Reason, and in a masterly Way, I am content that all my part be pretty much overlook'd, and to dwindle into the Character of a meer Publisher.

IT must be acknowledged, that some who joyned in the Vote of Requiring me to purge myself of a supposed Error, were so cautious as to disclaim doing it by Virtue of their Authority ; but that they only took upon them to give me their Advice, that my doing so in the present Circumstances, wou'd be for the Honor of God, the Edification of his Church, and my own Credit and Reputation. And this I know is the Light, it is often placed in, to you of my own particular Charge. They consider well, that no Arguments cou'd ever bring you to condemn me for refusing to submit to an authoritative Inquisition, when they cannot but know that you have frequent Opportunity of seeing the worst of Criminals treated at another Rate, and by innumerable Instances must be convinced, that proceeding **WITHOUT** Evidence is contrary to Justice, and the Foundations, upon which the Laws of our happy Civil Constitution are built. But when 'tis represented only as an Advice for Peace ; O ! then they may censure me as an obstinate, selfwill'd Man, that brought all this Trouble on myself by my own Stubbornness : If I were not smitten with something of the Heretical Pravity which 'tis to be fear'd, is diffus'd among us from the other side of the Water. But after all, this fair Pretence is a plain Banter upon the Common Sense of Mankind. For there is such a wide Essential Difference between an Advice and an authoritative Act or Command, that 'tis impossible one can be taken for the other. And it consists in this, that a
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person is oblig'd to follow Advice, not for the Sake of those who give it, but for the Good contain'd in it ; of which he, to whom, and for whose Sake 'tis given, is to judge ; and consequently, if he does not think it good, is not oblig'd to follow it. It is ridiculous then as well as unjust to use Penalties in matters of Advice, and by Punishments oblige people to follow it. Wherever this is done, it loses the Nature of Advice, and puts on all the Force and Authority of a Command. With what Consistency then with Reason and common Sense the Synod's requiring me to do a thing, which appear'd to me sinful, and punishing me for Non-compliance, can be call'd an Advice, I can leave to the meanest of you to judge ! And I must call on that Rev'd Member, who desir'd, that his concurring in a Vote to require me to purge myself contrary to the Conviction of my own Mind, might be only understood as offering his Advice of what might be Expedient for me, and yet afterwards joyn'd in Voting to punish me for not hearkning to it, to reconcile this to any Shadow of Justice or Reason.

I know there is one other Engine often play'd on you my People, to make you break with me, viz: that now since the Synod has cast me off, all who continue under my Ministry, are no longer Presbyterians : An Argument that carries a great deal of Ignorance and Arrogance in it. It is just of a piece with the Papists, assuming to themselves the name of Catholicks, and thereby proving that they are the only true Church, and with the Nonjurors setting up to be the only pure and genuine Church of England, and thereupon pronouncing all, who joyn'd with the Bishops that fill'd up the vacant Sees at the Revolution, to be in a dangerous Schism. For if no Presbyterian Church claims the Power, for refusing which to this Party, they have denied me Ministerial Communion, and thereupon pro-

pronounce you and me to be no Presbyterians, then 'tis plain, they declare 'em selves to be the only right and true Presbyterians, and every one else defective in what enters into the very Essence of such. And thus we shall suffer with very good Company : For while they deny us this distinguishing Character, for not acknowledging their new Claim of Power, all who disown such a Power in themselves and all others, must equally cease to be Presbyterians : And so this LITTLE Party, with their INQUISITORY Claim, shall not only be the sole, but the first Presbyterians that ever were known ; and whoever won't associate with 'em upon their new devised Model, must no longer bear that Honorable Name.

BUT if they shou'd place the Strength of their Objection, on this Foot : That whoever refuses Obedience to the Judicatories of a Presbyterian Church, can never pretend to be of that Principle and Denomination : And because I find some, who might have been thought to understand this Case much better, than they seem willing to do in my Affair, laying a mighty Stress on this Plea ; as if a particular Minister's, or Congregation's, or even Inferior Judicatory's disobeying the Decision of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Assembly of the Church, was unhinging all Government, everfive of all good Order and Discipline, and destructive of the just Subordination of Judicatories in any Church, I shall lay before you the Judgment of a Celebrated Divine in the Church of Scotland, supported by strong and irrefragable Arguments, where he evinces the contrary beyond all Exception. It is good Mr. Rutherford, who in his Preface to his Book, entituled, A Survey of the Survey of that Summ of Church-Discipline, penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker, says :

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The DEDICATION.

xv

‘ *NOR* doth it belong to the Essence of Presbyterial Government, that all Members of this Church, and inferior Judicatures, should so submit to the superiour respective Judicatures, that if they be grieved with the Sentence, they ought to acquiesce thereunto, and not to contra-act, but only appeal, until there shall be a general Assembly to determine the Matter. This never was, and I trust, nor shall ever be their mind who are for Presbyterial Government ; nor do our Brethren justly father it upon the general Assembly, Anno 1648. Sess. 30. For our Church acknowledgeth no subjection nor subordination of inferior Judicatures unto superiors, but in the Lord, and so to submit to any Sentence, and to forbear a duty of preaching the Gospel, praying, visiting, exhorting, catechising pastorally in Families, to abstain from the Lords Supper, and from Acts of due Censure, necessary for the Flock upon the known unjust sentence of a Synod, until a General Assembly (which possibly cannot be convened in an age to determine) is to 1. obey Men unjustly forbidding a called Minister of Christ to preach in season, and out of season, rather than God ; for they unjustly forbid, and the Lord justly commands ; therefore the called Minister must act and contra-act to their unjust Sentence, and not forbear for an Hour, as the Scripture clears, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. Acts 20. 31. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. 9. 16. Isa. 58: 1: Jer. 1. 17: Ezek. 2: 3, 4, 5. & 3. 10, 17. Acts 5. 28, 29. and so this is unjust. 2. It is to make Synods and Ecclesiastical Judicatures Lords of our Faith, which the Reformed Churches detest in popish Councils ; for all men and Councils most lawful can challenge only limited obedience and submission in the Lord to their Determinations, if they speak and command according to the Law and the Testimony, Isa. 8: 20: otherwise there is no light in them. And so it is popish.

‘*pish. 3. We conceive in performing Acts of that Go-*
‘*vernment which Christ owns in his Word, we do not*
‘*sin ; for no authority of a Judicature can make that*
‘*to be the word of God, and obedience to God, which*
‘*was not, as to the matter, obedience to God before that*
‘*authority, nor on the contrary. Now to abstain from*
‘*preaching, praying, eating and drinking at the Lord’s*
‘*Supper in a called Minister, and in a visible Profes-*
‘*sor, duly called and fitted, is sin ; then cannot the au-*
‘*thority of the Church, far less their known unjust sen-*
‘*tence make it lawful. 4. Suppose the general Assem-*
‘*bly should ratifie and confirm the unjust Sentence of*
‘*the inferiour Judicature, or annul their just sentence,*
‘*the people of God are not obliged to stand to either the*
‘*one or the other. So we disown the point which our*
‘*Brethren delivered to us in their Papers for Union*
‘*sought by us, as nothing belonging to the Essence of*
‘*Presbyterial Government, but reject it as unsound,*
‘*tyrannical and popish”.*

I have not cited this Learned Author, as if his Judg-
ment were to determine the Point. As I shou’d not al-
low his Authority to do so, where it may be against me,
so I will not plead any such thing, when it is plain and
direct in my Favour. It is his Arguments only that I
desire may have Weight ; and pronounce against them
who will, I must conclude they are unanswerable, and
must hold alike in all Cases of Duty, unless it can be
prov’d that fallible Judges are to supersede a DI-
VINE Command For wherever the Decisions of
the Church don’t clash with that (which they always
do, when any thing sinful is commanded, or any thing
enjoy’n’d for which there is not sufficient Warrant in the
Scripture) it is my Opinion they shou’d be obey’d. But
can any thing be more ridiculous, than to pretend that
a person’s differing from a Majority in a particular
Decision, and refusing to observe it upon a CON-
SCIENCE

SCIENTIOUS Scruple, makes him at once cease to be of that Principle and Persuasion? Is any thing more common than Dissents and Protestations in all our Ecclesiastical Assemblies against several Resolutions in them, as contrary to Reason and Equity? and sure it were horrid to expect Submission in that Case? I remember when some of these mighty men for Authority cou'd pronounce a certain Determination to be arbitrary, unjust and tyrannical; and pray was not that in effect to declare it ought not to be obey'd? And if that did not then make 'em cease to be Presbyterians; why shou'd my acting the same part in another Instance, any more affect me, or such as continue under my Ministry? Nay, did the Party themselves make any such Handle of the Members who protested against their last Resolution, entring it into their Minutes, 'that they thought themselves bound by the Laws of the Gospel to maintain MINISTERIAL COMMUNION with me, notwithstanding the Resolution of the Synod excluding me, which they look'd upon as UNWARRANTABLE AND UNJUST, BECAUSE CONVICTED OF NO SCANDAL.

BUT that the monstrous Absurdity of this Pretence may more fully appear, let us transfer it to Civil Society. Here indeed 'tis unavoidable that the Affairs of a State shou'd be transacted by Suffrages, and the Majority must be submitted to, where perhaps it is a real Prejudice to the Public. But is the minority immediately dismembred and pronounc'd Traitors and Rebels, if they don't tamely resign their Judgments to the prevailing Party? Is ever any more pretended to by such, as carry this Matter highest, than that men shou'd bear the Penalty, where Conscience reclaims against active Obedience? It is the Glory of our Constitution, especially under the present and such wise Administrations,

tions, that where some particular Laws may be thought contrary to Reason, and rather a Grievance to the People, Men may in a peaceable way express their Dislike of them, publicly plead for their Repeal and complain of their Severity; and such is the Wisdom and Mildness of our Government, that Dissenters know from their Experience, this will not be judg'd a sufficient Reason to look upon any, who may act this part, as changing sides and going over to another Party and Interest. So that however with this Party and their Admirers, I must pass for no Presbyterian, purely because I wou'd not submit to an Act of theirs, that appear'd to me Iniquitous and Unjust: I am confident that I or no other Man wou'd for the like Behaviour to the State, be branded as an Enemy and Rebel, while we give all the necessary Testimonies of our being Dutiful and Loyal Subjects. How did Dissenters relish this way of arguing, when some Men wou'd have them pass for Republicans and of Antimonarchical Principles, because they wou'd not submit to the Act of Uniformity? and refus'd Obedience to the Government in such Points as they cou'd not in CONSCIENCE comply with? And thus every one may see how weak and trifling, their most popular and shocking Argument is! which I have the longer insisted on, because it is the great Hope of their Cause, and every where thrown in your Teeth.

I can't be thought to deal unfairly with the Synod in publishing their Debates which were not calculated for the Press. For I had their particular Leave to have my Tryal taken in short Hand with this very View. And as I have not, (according to my Promise, when some objected, they wou'd not care to speak, since they might expect to have the Unaccuracies of any extempore Speech, they might

might make, set forth to publick View) plac'd my Defence on the little Slips or Incorrectness of Language, which might be observ'd in my Opposers; so it is to be consider'd, that the Debates on their part were not unpremeditated and unexpected; for they had all the time I was preparing my Answer, and dictating a Copy of it to their Clerks, to exco-
gitate the strongest Arguments in Support of their own Observations; and in the Intervals of the Synod they had further time to furnish themselves with proper Materials to make out every Article of the Charge against me, while I was under this great Disadvantage, that not knowing what Topics they were to insist upon, or what might be advanc'd by so many different Hands, I had all to answer off hand, and several times was oblig'd to reply to quite opposite Schemes maintain'd by Members in support of the Libel; and had very long and labor'd Speeches to unravel and reply to immediately on the Spot: So that if an Allowance be made on any Side, 'tis plain it ought to be on mine, who was on the Defensive, and knew not where or how I was to be attack'd, till the Onset was fairly made: and such as at any time spoke in the Capacity of Members on the same Side of the Question with me, labor'd under the same Disadvantage. At least this may be an Apology for the Liberty I have taken sometimes in adding to the Replies which were made in the Synod: Which is but rarely done, and never without such Intimation as will easily discover it to the Careful Reader.

THE Spirit of Calumny and Defamation has been so outrageous, as to represent me as an ARIAN, merely for my holding this Principle; that the Doctrine of the TRINITY is so Sublime and Myste-
rious, that we ought not peremptorily to pronounce everlasting Damnation upon any, who don't receive all the Ex-
planations

cations given of it by the Orthodox : *And therefore I dislike the DAMNATORY Clauses in the Athanasian Creed. The Learned and Rev'd Dr. Calamy, (who has given undeniable Proof of his being as Orthodox in the Doctrine of the Supreme Deity of Christ, as any Man) looks upon this Principle, I espouse, to be so far from being ARIAN, that he justifies it, as one sufficient Reason for the Non-conformity of the Ejected Ministers, in his 10th Chap: of the Abbridgment of Baxter's Life, and in his Defence of it. But was ever any so ignorant, or malicious, as to represent these two thousand Ministers, who scrupl'd Subscription to the Damnatory Clauses of that Creed, as ARIANS ! may I not complain of it, as the vilest and basest Treatment, that I shou'd be branded for an HERETIC, merely for maintaining, such an important Truth, which the greatest Men among Non-conformists, and I may add Conformists too, have openly asserted and defended? And yet this was the only Foundation of all that Stir, Mr. Echlin in his great Zeal thought it his Honor to make upon this Head; and what a poor hand he made of it, when after all his bustling and great threatening, he durst put it on no other Issue than denying the Words for which I brought my Action against him, you had Opportunity to see in the publick Tryal at our last Assizes, when the Verdict was given in my Favor. He then boasted, there wou'd be another Tryal of Skill, and he wou'd have me indicted as an ARIAN. But I must tell him and all his Abettors, they dare not attempt any such thing ; or if they do, perhaps Damages will not always be-so small ; as upon the last Occasion.*

'TIS obvious, the only fair Answer that can be given to this History of my Tryal, must consist in a Detection, either of the Falshood of the main Facts I have related, or of the weakness of the Reasons, by which

which my Principles and Conduct is supported, and if any Man shall do me the Charitable Office, as to set me Right in any matter, wherein I am mistaken either in Point of Fact or Argument, so far from meeting with any keen Resentment, he may be assured of my hearty Thanks. And I shall always show my self open to Conviction, and never be ashamed to make a Public Retraction. But if any, instead of such an Answer, shou'd only bring a Railing Accusation, it gives me pleasure to Think, (tho' with others this may do more Execution than the best pointed Argument or Reason,) that you have so often found so little in the most formidable Stories, that have been vented against me, that you have now Learn'd to despise them, and can perfectly distinguish between Scandal and Argument. I shou'd look upon it as a very ill Office, nay an Arrant Drudgery to be imploy'd in making Reprisals on any of the Party in the same manner, if it were really in my Power. I don't say this to Intimidate any from letting fly all their Artillery of this Sort against me. If any have pleasure in it, and think it for the Honour of their Cause, I shall perhaps find Leisure to attend 'em as far as my own Vindication Requires.

THE Truth of this Narrative may be as much depended on, as any of this kind can reasonably be. For I have had the best Advantages, I cou'd desire, to draw up the Naked undisguised Truth. The Reverend Person afterwards mention'd, to Admiration took the whole Proceedings in short Hand, I have had 'em since Copied out at Length, and do assure you and the World that I have Faithfully Extracted, according to the best of my Understanding, out of his Papers, what I now Publish. And if any Question the Truth of this, I am ready to produce 'em as my Vouchers. But I can't apprehend any Danger of this sort: For all the matters of Fact that are of any Moment

are either attested by the Syondical Minutes, or can be prov'd by sufficient competent Witnesses. And 'tis with pleasure I Remember, that vast Numbers of different Denominations, and some as good Judges of Men and things as are almost to be met with any where, did with amazing Patience and even Eagerness attend this whole Affair; and to them I do Appeal. if I have not given a fair and even favourable Representation of these Proceedings against me, and I cannot but in this Public manner acknowledge the Justice that has been done me by many of Them.

I am not insensible, that the steady and affectionate Part you my Friends have acted in this storm of Slander and Party Rage, that has been rais'd against me, Challenges the most public and thankful acknowledgments in my Power. It was your Happiness and mine too, that your former Excellent Pastor the Reverend Mr. Thomas Jackson, was of that Temper, as to promote pure, peaceable and practical Religion without bitterness or Rage against any, and to instil into you the Spirit of Christianity, not that of a Party. To pursue the same blessed Design, tho' with very unequal Abilities, is all the Return for your dutiful Regards, I wou'd propose or pretend to aim at: And in a special manner it shall be my Care to teach you according to the Apostle's direction, to try all things, as the most likely means to hold fast that which is good. For I am confident whatever pretended inconveniencies may be in Men's Judging for 'emselves; the inconveniencies are far less on that Side, than in an Implicit Resignation to such as in Words must own 'emselves to be as fallible as others, tho' they never Err, but are still in the Right, if we may believe 'emselves. And this I wou'd particularly press you to in the present Case, try the Principles for which this Party were angry with me, by enquiring into the
Grounds

Grounds and Reasons of 'em, which the better you understand, the more firmly you will be Established in the Truth, and be more Resolute in this Day of Tryal, and the better able to withstand the Assaults and Arts of my Restless Adversaries. But if on the Contrary, you don't Examine the Grounds and Reasons of my Conduct, I can't Expect but you may be in Time removed from your stedfastness, and they, whose Eye is evil towards my present Settlement and Tranquility, be able to Carry their long wish'd for Design against me. But I am persuaded and hope better things of you.

THAT you may adorn your Profession with the Meekness of Wisdom, with a Zeal of God according to knowledge, that you may abound in every Vertue and Grace, having the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, shall be the humble incessant Prayer and Endeavour of,

Your most oblig'd and
Affectionate Pastor.

Thomas Nevin.



ERRATA.

- P**AGE 13. l. 16. *Read* Contrivance, instead of Countenance.
P. 39. l. 1. *Read* or, instead of, as.
P. 86. l. 16. *Read* 1713.
P. 108. l. 4. before the Canaanites, &c. add, and as some think.
P. 111. l. 18. *Read* but, instead of and.
P. 115. l. 27. *Read* no God, instead of not a God.
P. 127. l. 19. *Read* inward, instead of outward.
P. 177. l. 10. *Read* there, instead of these.

N. B. by the Printer. In Page 157. in Mr. *Mcc-bride's* Sense of the Decisive Vote, that the Words, I unministred, (Lines 11. 12.) and (Lines 13. 14.) I allow, should be both in Capital Letters according to my Instructions.



INTRO.



INTRODUCTION.

THE Design of preserving a man's good name and usefulness in the World may be Justly avowed, and to use all lawful means Necessary for that End, is the Common and natural Right of Mankind : Especially when open violent attempts to ruine both are made under the pretence of Authority and flaming Zeal for the Cause of God. How much therefore I am intitul'd by the great Law of self preservation thus to appeal from the hasty decrees of a new *Synodical Power* to the Reason and Candor of Men and Christians, for doing right to my *Injur'd Character and INNOCENCE*, the following Narrative will abundantly Show. But this is far from being my only or principal view in this Undertaking. The Interests of truth, the unalienable Right of Men's Judging for 'emselfes, the honor of Nonconformity, and above all the Prerogative of the Infinitely wise and unerring Head of the Church seem to be very sensibly affected by these Extraordinary proceedings I am now to lay open. The pleasure of having suffer'd in support of such a glorious cause makes me Easy under all that load of Infamy, that has been

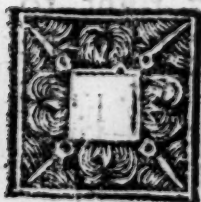
B cast

cast upon me by this late conduct of my Brethren; and if the impartial representation of my Case can be any manner of occasion to lead others into juster apprehensions of these Important points; I shall rejoice in the midst of all the calumnies and bitter Investives, which the *spight of some and credulity of others* may bandy thro' the Country against me.

Now to give every sincere Impartial Enquirer full opportunity to form a right Judgement of the proceedings I am to Relate, It will be proper to Insert the original Letter, which was pretended to contain the whole grounds of offence taken at me, and is as follows, &c.

Mr. Nevin's LETTER to the Rev'd Mr. William Smith of Ballee.

Rev'd Sir,



I SHALL spend no time in making Complements to you for the Friendly and Christian Office, you have done in sending me from Belfast a Copy of the Affidavit, made upon my Conversation at Mr. Hannington's in Monyrea, in or about December last, which runs in the following words.

Com Down Ss.

We do declare that in or about December 1723: Mr. Thomas Nevin was at the House of Cap. William Hannington in Monyrea when and where much being said concerning the Magistrates Power in punishing the Offenders against the second Table

to Mr. Smith.

3

' *Table of the Law, the said Mr. Nevin did positive-*
' *ly say, That it is no Blasphemy to say Christ is not*
' *GOD.*

' *Jur. Cor. me 27 die maii* William Hannyngton.

' *apud Cumber in Com. predict.* Thomas Kennedy.

' Simon Isaac. Solomon Macbride.

' I know the best acknowledgement, I can make,
' will be to put it in your Power to do Justice to
' my Character, for which you have express'd so
' much Concern; I am well assured, what I shall
' say, will be more than enough to satisfy your
' self what barbarous Injustice is done me in the
' Case.

' But what Strangers, or some old Friends and
' Acquaintance, who in the present Ferment have
' been very free with my Reputation, will think
' of this Defence, is more than I am able to
' Judge. Many have given too much Proof, that
' they are very easy to receive an ill Impression of
' such, as their Cause requires to be Blacken'd,
' but very Difficult, if ever, to admit a Charitable
' Opinion of 'em; when the Evidence is strong
' enough to strick them as Blind, as they affect
' to be. And therefore it will be no disappoint-
' ment, if after this solemn Declaration of what
' pass'd on that Occasion, and after what I say,
' here in the grand Point, in which some will have
' me a Heretick whether I will, or no, shou'd
' Men of strong Zeal still continue their suspicions,
' and be muttering Fears of they know not what.
' At least the true Friends of Christian Liberty, and
' any who don't imagine Charity an Arbitrary
' thing, to be dealt out in what measure and to
' whom they please, as they hope all things, so
' will believe the best of ever man, of whom
' they have any Room left to do so: And I am

B 2

' in

4 Mr. Nevin's Letter,
in no pain, that not only these but my bitterest
Enemies, must allow Dissimulation and Craft
has never been my Crime. Frankness and honest
openness of Mind has still been my way, perhaps
to a Fault. And sure such as ever look'd upon
this as any part of my Character, will not suffer
themselves to doubt of it now, when I am free
to tell the World, I have not the least Tempt-
ation to depart from it to Ward off the injury
design'd me. For I despair not (if there be any
necessity) to convince every unprejudic'd Mind,
that this poyson'd Arrow, in all its strength is
not able to Wound me, in the part they Aim at.
The whole Conversation that has the least Re-
ference to what this *Extraordinary Affidavit* con-
tains, was occasioned by my mentioning that Ar-
ticle of the *Westminster-confession* of Faith, where
'tis asserted to be a branch of the Civil Magis-
trat's Power, *to suppress all Blasphemies*, Chap. 23.
§. 3. And this the Affidavit does clearly insin-
uate to have been the occasion of what is therein
charged upon me. I alledged that this Assertion
as supported by the Text quoted for its
Proof, *Lev. xxiv. 16.* might be of dangerous
Consequence. For it plainly vested the Magistrate
with a Power to knock all o' the head, who by
any means might be reputed *Blasphemers*, and to
illustrate the Danger of his, I gave for an in-
stance *the Case of the Jews*, and said to this
effect, that Christians generally reckon'd them
guilty of Blasphemy for denying Christ to be
GOD, and observed that the wickedness and Ab-
surdity of treating them according to that Ar-
ticle might at once appear from this Demonstra-
tion, That in scripture we had very express
Prophecies, that the Jews shall be Converted
to

to Mr. Smith.

5

to the Christian Faith, which must be rendered utterly impossible, if whenever they come among us Christians, they were sure to be put to Death, as soon as they presumed to deny our Blessed Saviour to be GOD. This Argument was cavill'd at; and I was ask'd, if it was not a Sin or Error in them to do so, to which I readily replied, it was no doubt a Sin and Error in them, but not such as made them obnoxious to Punishment from the secular Powers. And then it was urged, was it not *Blasphemy in them to deny Christ to be GOD?* To which I answered, and doubt not, I repeated it again, *that it was no Blasphemy IN THEM to deny Christ to be GOD.* It was upon this Occasion, that the Gentleman of the House ask'd me that wise Question, *was it not Blasphemy to call Christ a Creature?* To which I made what seem'd to be the fittest Reply for his Depth and Understanding. No sure it's not; *for don't we all own Christ to be GOD and MAN!* But yet to my Surprize pass'd with him for as rank Heresy as ever was Broach'd, and *vexed his righteous Soul.* Accordingly when this Matter began first to be bruited abroad, this was made the severest Charge against me. And when I went to his House to complain of the uncivil Usage I received from him and his Servant, he then renewed this very Charge, and still continues to make a heavy Outcry on this Head against me and the worthy Gentleman, who happen'd to call with me at his House, because the Gentleman labour'd to convince him, that what I said about *Christ's being a Creature*, as he is Man was perfectly Right and Orthodox. Tho' this matter is dropt in the Affidavit, and the

the Reason of it is plain, that was managed by some who understood it much better than he did.

This I give as the substance of the Conversation, upon which this *strange Affidavit* is grafted. And I do protest with as much Solemnity, as if I were upon my Oath, that if I can be supposed to remember a Conversation, which began to make a Noise a few Weeks after, I do this one, and have without mincing any thing, or softening any part of it fairly and fully Represented it; and hope in due time to satisfy all unbiassed Persons that I have really done so. In the mean time I can't think 'tis any Injustice to those who have joyn'd in this Testimony against me, to make the following Remarks upon *their Affidavit* Compar'd with my Draught of the Conference.

I. IT plainly appears that the whole Charge against me is made up of one single independent Proposition. Now what *Conversation* mayn't in this manner be made as Wicked and Frightful as *Hell* it self? To take a Scrap of it without any Regard to what either went before or follow'd after; Is this fair Dealing? Why is it concealed? If it were not for Fear the poor *Affidavit* wou'd be no better than the Bee that has lost its Sting, *animamque in vulnere ponit*. What a sad Hand might be made of the Bible itself at this Rate? Heresy and Blasphemy might by such proceeding be father'd upon that Fountain of Truth; and the Darling *Confession* too made the Spring of many an Error.

II. THAT it is not only Just but Necessary to suppose, that the Assertion mentioned in the Oath, must have been founded on, and had a Respect to some antecedent Instance of Per-
sows,

to Mr. Smith.

7

' sons, who denied Christ to be God. Since the
' J E W S were mentioned, and not the least
' distant Hint given of any other Set of men,
' who embrace the same pernicious Error ; I
' will not say, let Charity Judge, nor plead on-
' ly upon Presumption, but appeal to the Rigor
' of Justice, and all the Rules of fair Construction,
' if it must not be understood as spoken of their
' case, tho' it had been uttered in the same
' very Words contained in the *artful Affidavit*.
' But let it be observed, that 'tis not so much
' as pretended that these are the express Words
' spoken ; but only they swear that I positively
' said, it is no Blasphemy to deny Christ to be
' God. If this be applied to the *particular*
' Case before us, it is very true what they have
' Sworn, and so it is express'd with so much
' Caution that they have still a starting Hole to
' creep out at. But dare they swear that I ex-
' press'd it in this Manner without Respect, to or
' without Word or Words confining it to the
' J E W S ? Dare they take upon them to swear
' it was meant and spoken by me in this general
' independent Way, as an universal Proposition
' extending to all who think as meanly and wick-
' edly in this Point of our Blessed Saviour as the
' Jews do ?

' III. T H A T the *Affidavit* agrees with my
' Representation in this, that it was about the
' Power of the Civil Magistrate the Conversation
' began. And consequently in all Reason, when
' there was no Definition given of *Blasphemy*,
' what I said, must be understood of that Sort and
' Degree of Blasphemy, which justly comes with-
' in the Sphere of human Laws. And in that
' View, I still stand by the Assertion confined to
' the

the J E W S, and pronounce 'tis no *Blasphemy* in them. I may be the bolder in this, when the Wisdom of the *British* Nation has seen fit to alter the Form of an Oath in Favour of the J E W S, that they may be qualified to be Subjects of that Kingdom.

Upon the whole then, mayn't this at least stop the mighty Current of Slander, which like an overbearing Flood has broke loose thro' the Country against me, as if this dark, imperfect and sly Affidavit did fully prove me an Arian? Sure none can be so ignorant as to fancy, that, if the Case be truly so, as I have stated it, what I then said, does any way favour the Arian Principle. Will they but suspend judging me as in the least inclined to doubt of our SAVIOUR's DEITY, till these Persons think fit to supply what is wanting in *their Affidavit*; or be oblig'd to answer upon Oath, to some few plain Questions, relating to that Conversation, upon which all this Clamor is rais'd. If any thing said by me there or any where else (let the busy Instrument of this Affidavit's being made, bellow for a little time as much as he pleases) can with any shew of Justice amount to prove me an Arian, or one that denies the DIVINITY of my Dearest Lord, let not Country, nor Law, nor Synod spare me.

I have purposely declined all Personal Matters with Respect to every one concerned in this present Affair against me. The Master of the House is out of my Reach indeed, and he may well defy me to put it further out of his Power to hurt me, than 'tis already, where he is, or may hereafter be known. I pass over the two others who joyn in this *Affidavit*, till I see how they

to Mr. Smith.

9

‘ they acquit ’emselfes, when they come to a particular Examination on this Head. My chief Accuser Mr. C. E----- of Bangor, I can’t blame to catch at every little Story to eke out his Evidence, which he found by his Lawyers, he durst not depend on so far as to venture a Plea of Justification, however often and loudly he boasted before hand, he wou’d. And I am wholly in the Dark, but the Worthy Justice may have been in the way of his Duty; and so shall spare that Return he richly deserves, If I can be once assured it was none of his proper Business, but the Effect of his good will to hurt my Character by that scurvy Affidavit, which may be found afterwards to touch his Worship more sensibly than it does me.

‘ And now Dr. Sr. I have only one thing to answer for to you; you may alledge, I have not justified the whole of the Conversation, as I have given it myself. And I freely own, I am no way solicitous to do it. If there be any Fault found in it, I shall be glad to have it discovered, and never blush that in an off hand free Conversation I dropt something in which some good Judges may spy a Mistake. And even in that case I shall have this Comfort, that it will be a brewd Sign, that my Narrative is genuine and not improved by after Thought.

‘ To conclude, Sir, I despair of satisfying any concerning my Soundness in that Point of our Saviour’s Deity, who are not already Satisfy’d by the Testimony, which was given by the General Synod 1721, in favour of all the Non-subscribers; viz. that they had all declared their belief of that Doctrine in the **STRONGEST TERMS**. And I am convinc’d that all who

C

‘ read

read this Letter will find that there is no Reason from the Conversation, to which the Affidavit now handed about Relates, to suspect that either I was Insincere in what I then voluntarily Expressed, or that I have since altered my Sentiments on that Head.

We are indeed charged by the Rev'd Mr. Mastertown with having acted inconsistently with our known Principles by the condescension which we made upon that Occasion. We were then of Opinion that we had a sufficient Salvo for the Principles we had espous'd concerning the Rights of Men and Christians. But I must freely own it, that I account all inquisitory Methods to be so contrary to the essential Rules of natural Equity, to the Discipline which Christ has Instituted in his Church, and even to the known Rules of our Association; that, if what we did in that Juncture, gives any countenance to an unjust and unchristian Method of issuing Scandal, I for my part am sorry that ever I gave way to it, and shall for the future take care, that no Temptation whatsoever shall make me venture so far again.

As to myself, I can Appeal to you in particular, and to all who have had opportunity of hearing my Sermons, or with whom I have convers'd concerning this blessed Truth, that I cou'd not deny it in consistency with my real Sentiments. And how improbable is it, that while I had a Prosecution depending against one who had Accused me of being an *Arian*, I should have dropt any thing in favour of that Error, in a mixed Company, where I neither ask'd nor could expect, that what I said should be Concealed? If all this will not stop the Mouths of unreason-
able

to Mr. Smith.

11

'onable Men I don't see any thing then, that is
'to be done by me, or any other under a smaller
'Degree of Suspicion, but just to let Peoples mad
'Jealousies spend and weary out 'emselves, trust-
'ing that God will bring forth our Righteousness
'as the Light, and Judgment as Noon-Day. I am
'with Gratitude and Respect

Rev'd Sir.

Your most affectionate Brother,
and obliged humble Servant

June. 11. 1724.

THOMAS NEVIN.

POSTSCRIPT.

'THIS Day came before me Dr. Andrew
'Smith and voluntarily made Oath, That
'in the beginning of January last being with
'Mr. Thomas Nevin, at the House of Mr.
'Hannington of Monyrea, Mr. Nevin did in his
'hearing challenge the said Mr. Hannington
'for having misrepresented some Conversation
'he had with him, some time before concern-
'ing the Power of the Magistrate in punishing
'Blasphemy, and he being asked by Mr. Nevin
'whether or not what was said by him of its
'being no Blasphemy to deny Christ to be
'God, did not relate to the aforesaid Conver-
'sation and the Case of the Jews: Did aver
'to this Purpose, that he remembered not what
'was then said on this Head; but believed that
'his Man Solomon did; who upon his being
C 2 'called

‘ called and asked the same Question said in
 ‘ these or Words to this Purpose, That he re-
 ‘ membered to have heard Mr. *Nevin* say, It
 ‘ was no *Blasphemy* to deny Christ to be God,
 ‘ but that upon Account of his going out and in,
 ‘ did not know how the Conversation was brought
 ‘ in, or to what these Words related.

‘ Sworn before me this

‘ 12 of June 1724.

Andrew Smith.

‘ *Herc. Mr. Gomerie.*

The Affidavit, which occasion'd the publishing this Letter, was indeed made with a pretended view to serve the busy accuser therein mention'd, in the action I had brought against him in the Civil Courts, for saying HE knew me to be an Arian, and wou'd prove me one. But I soon found that some were Resolved it shou'd serve another purpose also. For some Partisans of the Faction, that is Eager for an Entire Rupture among the Dissenting Protestants, were very Industrious in spreading copies of it, and publickly triumphing in it; as a certain Indication of the truth of these Fears and Jealousies, they had long been muttering, of dangerous Errors creeping into the Church: And being assur'd that as one of 'em had been in the secret of it from the beginning, so another fir'd with a more than ordinary Zeal, did all he cou'd to have it printed along with the bundle of stories, which *Mr. Gilbert Kennedy* has thought fit to Entertain the World with in the Introduction to his late performance, I cou'd not but apprehend there was something in what the Gentleman, in whose house the Conversation happen'd, had vented in
 his

his passion some days before the Affidavit was made, when he threatned he wou'd be up with me at the Synod, as well as the Affizes ; which was quickly put beyond any remaining doubt by the open Declarations of some, who of Late years have had a great stroke in directing Synodical Proceedings, that on account of this Affidavit I shou'd be Laid aside from being a member of the Synod, which was to meet within a few days. And therefore I thought it the best way to ward off this Injury by publishing a short account of the Conversation, out of which the obnoxious Sentence in the Affidavit had been most unfairly pick'd ; not doubting but when every one saw what barbarous Injustice was done me in the Form and Countenance of such an Imperfect and in itself Ridiculous Affidavit, there wou'd be so much Remaining Charity in the breasts of my Brethren, as to suspend believing the worst of me, till the matter cou'd be tried in a Regular Way.

But I soon found myself very much Deceived in this Expectation, and that in stead of calming the minds of such, as had distinguished themselves by a keen opposition of all, who had not given into the voluntary Subscription in the Synod 1721, the cry and suspicion of Error was mightily encreas'd by the Defence I had offer'd for myself in the Letter. And accordingly a member was prepared to make the Attaque upon me, before any other business was Enter'd upon. He in a very serious strain represented the Concern he was under, on account of a Paper just published bearing my Name, he said, he was not sure it was mine, it might be spurious, and he wou'd be glad to find

find it so. But if I own'd it, he cou'd not have freedom to sit in Synod with me, till I had given Satisfaction for those very offensive words, which had been sworn against me, and for some other things, which he look'd upon offensive in the Letter itself, and particularly pointed out that part of the Conversation, as it is set down †, where he observed that the words were own'd to be spoken, but only with respect to the Jews, and that in another place, * that the Blasphemy Intended thereby was only that sort and Degree of it, which Justly comes within the Sphere of human Laws. But he urg'd that even this was far from Removing his offence, it being certainly Blasphemy in the Jews as well as Christians to Deny Christ to be God; and to prove this he refer'd to the Text, afterwards mention'd in my answer to the Libel, Levit. 24. 15, 16. where continued he, 'tis plain from the Instance of the Egyptian, upon whose occasion that Law was particularly enacted, that a person who did not own the true God might yet be guilty of Blaspheming him, and by the special Direction of Heaven was to be punished for that crime, which at once overturns, says he, all the Defence Mr. *Nevin* has pretended to make for himself. After acknowledging the Letter to be really mine and no Counterfeit, the Reply which I made to this was in Substance just the same, which will be afterwards met with in my answer to the Commitees grounds of offence, where I open up the nature of Blasphemy, as it is a crime

crime which comes within the sphere of human Laws ; And to avoid any needless Repetition, I shall not resume it in this place. And, the Reader, I hope, for his own Ease will Indulge me in this as a general Rule, where any matter is sufficiently consider'd in the original papers, which make up a part of this Narrative, Either to refer that entirely to them, or to give a brief summary thereof as the occasion requires

But I complain'd of his unkind Usage in making this motion without first observing Christ's direction in speaking privately to me. The Good-man excus'd himself, and said he had only seen the Letter late last night, had no opportunity of meeting with me, and was so sensibly affected with the view the Letter appeared to him in, that he cou'd not have freedom to sit in Synod with me, till I had removed his offence, which he said I had done by what was now offer'd and that for his part he was fully satisfied. Upon this it was however observ'd that there seem'd to be an Irregularity in his motion, it being evident that no prosecution can Regularly Commence according to our Constitution in the Synod, which is the *Dernier* Resort of Justice among us. And therefore if I had vented, what no one cou'd doubt to be really Arianism; such a motion ought not to be made in this place to Exclude me from Communion without Regular process : For this were to Destroy the just Subordination of our Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and if such methods were follow'd, then all Discipline wou'd be taken immediately into the hands of the Synod

Synod, and consequently there wou'd be no use nor occasion for other Inferior Iudicatories, but all Processess might at once Commence and Issue in the highest, from which there cou'd ly no appeal: A practice as it easily might appear to be contrary to the Dictates of prudence and the plainest measures of Justice, so it was in a manner Impracticable, that such an assembly shou'd sit so long as to observe the necessary Rules for beginning and carrying on a Tryal of such Moment, and consequence as this; And therefore this had never been done either in the Church of Scotland, or among ourselves in any single Instance. And further it was propos'd by an Experienc'd Minister of the Presbytery of *Down*, that the affair having only broke out, since the meeting of that Presbytery they had no opportunity to move in it at all, but as soon as possible, they wou'd take it regularly into their Consideration, and were willing indeed to be directed by the Synod in the order and method of the Tryal; but for the Synod to lay hold upon it *brevi manu*, before the Presbytery had Enquir'd into the Rise and Grounds of the *Fama Clamosa*, and taken the other necessary steps to ripen it for a tryal, was to break thro' the Essential Rights of the Presbytery, to invert the order of Discipline, and to give me the foulest play Imaginable. Upon the whole it was Concluded that men's Zeal against supposed Errors ought to conduct itself in a way agreeable to the invariable Rules of Equity and scriptural Discipline.

To this it was replied, that there were Examples very fresh in the memories of most present

sent, in which Men were brought to tryal before the Synod in cases, which had never been under the consideration of their Respective Presbyteries. And accordingly two particular Instances were condescended upon. The one was the case of that accuser of the Rev'd Mr. *Samuel Haliday*, whom he mentions in the preface to his Reasons against the Imposition of the *Westminster Confession of faith*. But this was plainly made out to be a groundless mistake: For tho' that person was not prosecuted before his own Presbytery, yet the Presbytery of *Belfast* before whom the Scandal was rais'd against Mr. *Haliday*, did according to the true order of Discipline properly, having a Letter under that person's hand, by which he made himself an accuser, did cite him before them to sustain the part and character he had taken upon himself: But he declining to make out his Charge, The whole affair was in a very usual method of Discipline Referr'd to the General Synod then sitting by the Presbytery of *Belfast*, where the said person was by His own Letter and other Evidences made appear to be strictly and properly an accuser, and not offering to make out his Charge in a Regular way, nor being willing to take it upon him; and Mr. *Haliday* to the full conviction of all proving his Innocence, he was Rebuk'd for his slanderous Report, which is no way parallel to the motion made against me.

But the other was much less to the purpose, being only the Case of a Minister Excepted against as a Judge in a particular tryal, who had openly Declared himself in favor of one of the Parties, and when some passages in a very obnoxious Sermon he had preach'd, during the Dependence of that cause before the Synod in

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the hearing of many Ministers, were offered to be Read as Evidence to disqualify him from having a Right to Judge in that affair, it was then pleaded by these very Men, who were so Eager for the Synod's falling upon me in this irregular unprecedented way, that if any man had a mind to complain of that Sermon, the Established methods of Discipline requir'd it shou'd be done first before the Preacher's own Presbytery. But what cou'd be so Impertinently urg'd, (there being no Scandal charg'd against him, and the affair complain'd of not being in the nature of the thing capable to be refer'd to another Judicatory, to protect a favorite in a priviledge he had justly forfeited, must now be utterly disclaim'd as just and reasonable in the case of one who is mark'd out for an Instance of a Synodical Resentment) and wou'd not this tempt one to apply, what is said but too Justly of the partial proceedings of some Courts, **SHEW ME THE MAN, I'LL SHEW YOU THE LAW?**

It may well be matter of Admiration, when the case was so very plain, how it came to be suffer'd after all to be brought in Judgement before the Synod, and that it met with no greater opposition. The true account whereof is really this, That the Humor of being offended at me appear'd so Impetuous, and the cry for entering upon the affair was so general from the prevailing party, that it was at once needless to resist it, and the sure way for any one's being pointed at as screening a dreadful matter from a just Enquiry, and yet they were only able to Edge in by degrees, and were far from avowing at this time the full length it was afterward carried and therefore they fell upon a Double pretence to have

have it at once fairly submitted to their consideration. Some alledg'd that the Letter being published to the World and own'd by me in the Face of the Synod, this made it an offence *apud Acta*; and that the Defence I had made now in their hearing contain'd matter of offence, and that they had taken notes of my Expressions, which they were Resolved to make grounds of offence against me. But it being shown, that the affair of the *Affidavit* was a matter of fact, which cou'd not possibly be Enquir'd into, when some of my Evidences who had been present at the Conversation to which it Referr'd were not on the spot; the party being desir'd to mention those Expressions, which I had dropt in my Extempore Defence of the Letter, and I was ready to stand my tryal for them that very Instant, they cou'd make no manner of Reply to the former and declin'd accepting this last proposal; for it was the Letter they wanted to fall foul upon. And so their next pretence was, that tho' the Synod cou'd not propose to Issue this Scandal according to the ordinary Rules of procedure, yet it being an affair of such an Uncommon nature, they might take it upon 'em to Enquire so far into it, if there was any thing of that Importance in the *Affidavit* as to be sufficient ground for a tryal, and then to direct the Channel in which it ought to Run, and that on these accounts the Letter shou'd be Read and maturely Consider'd: But tho' I observed to them they might save 'emselves that pains: For it was my Request, that without any more ado, they shou'd take it for granted, that the *Affidavit* was just cause of process against me, and appoint it to be put into a Regular method of being tryed before the Presbytery of Down,

and such Correspondents as they were pleas'd to name, yet Diverted they wou'd not be, the Letter must be Read; which was no sooner done, but the great secret of all their Design and management began to disclose itself. There was nothing heard now, but the Reasonableness and even Necessity of Censuring me, their Zeal for the honor of the Lord Redeemer and their concern for the honor of the Synod, made 'em think it their Indispensable duty to refuse sitting with me as a member of their supreme Indicatory: and they pleaded this might be justly done before the tryal was Issued, and advanc'd several arguments to support this their motion, these are all consider'd in the papers already mention'd, Except the following very Extraordinary Reasons, which for their being so much out of the way and coming from hands, who bore no inconsiderable share in this whole transaction, do deserve a very particular Notice. They are both taken from the practice of Civil magistrates. The first was their Conduct in the time of a Plague, whereby Innocent Persons are depriv'd of their Liberty and privileges upon bare Suspicion, and without waiting for the formality of a tryal: and consequently it is but Reasonable, that upon the Suspicion of Error, that Men shou'd be denied Communion with the flock of Christ to prevent the Infection, unless we can suppose that the great Head of the Church has not made as full provision for the Safety and preservation of his Subjects, as the Princes and Rulers of the World have for theirs. To which this answer was shortly given, That our Bless'd Lord had provided better for the Security and Protection of his people than the wisest and most prudent Law-givers ever had.

had or possibly cou'd do : For he had Left behind him a Sytem of Laws so complete and perfect as to reach to all the infinite variety of possible cases, and that no Circumstances cou'd happen, in which the Church had not very full and sufficient Direction how to provide for her own Safety, and to be kept from being a Prey to Men of Corrupt Principles And therefore to Insinuate, that the Kingdom of Christ was in a worse and more defenceless condition than the Kingdoms of this World, unless Synods and Councils were allow'd to take pattern from the Customs and Laws of Men, to make new Regulations, without any precedent in the Word of Christ, was to reflect upon the Wisdom and Care of this Divine Lawgiver. And it was further added, that this was an Instance of a very Dangerous nature, For as Civil States did provide for their own Safety by taking away the Lives of Suspected Persons in the time of a Raging Plague, so the Argument, if it prov'd any thing, wou'd by the same consequence plead for the Church's having a Power to destroy all *Heretics*, and every one against whom the Suspicion of heretical pravity is raised, Seeing no less will put the Church upon an Equal foot as to her security with the Kingdoms of this World : For, 'tis certain, Exclusion from Ministerial Communion, or even the Intimacies of Religious fellowship will not Effectually prevent such from Spreading the Contagion : But as long as they are permitted to live, they may diffuse the Venom and Malignity of their damnable Heresies. And in the conclusion it was observed, that this was strange Doctrine among *Protestant Dissenters*, that the Church was vested with a proper Legislative power, such as Civil states and Kingdoms do claim

claim and Exercise for their own Preservation in the time of Danger. And this puts me in mind of another Reason, and the Reply that was given unto it, *viz.* that as upon a Complaint's being made upon Oath to a Justice of Peace there is a Warrant Issued, and the Person accused is committed to Goal, tho' he cannot be tried till the next Assize, so the parallel might hold thus far, that a complaint being now brought against me, and particular grounds of offence assign'd, I might be Laid aside or Suspended from the Exercise of the Ministry, (so high did their Resentment sometimes Run) till the Scandal cou'd be Regularly Issued before my Presbytery: But it was soon observed that what the Justice of peace did in that case was pursuant to an Act of Parliament directing and empowering him to take that Course, when there was Oath-made before him of such and such Crimes: But as the Synod had nothing but Extrajudicial Evidence before 'em against me, so they ought to produce their particular Warrant out of the great Charter of Christ's Kingdom, where they were expressly authoris'd to censure a Man before he is convicted; otherwise the Example was wholly impertinent and foreign. But it must not be forgot that there was one other plea advanc'd to Justify proceeding not only to some smaller censure, till the cause shou'd be fully heard, but even to the highest, which cou'd be Inflicted, when the guilt in all its pretended Aggravations shou'd be plainly fasten'd upon me. For there being a motion to have the genuineness of the *Affidavit* attested by the Persons 'emselves who made it, I prevented the Synod's trouble by owning that it was Really genuine, and said so much might appear to every one who read the Letter, where I had published it.

it to the World as a Certain matter of fact ; this was laid hold on by one who has lately distinguish'd himself by his Extraordinary Skill in writing controversy, and made use of as an unanswerable argument to end the matter all at once, when he deliver'd himself in these very words, "'Tis true
" no man ought to be depriv'd of his priviledges,
" until he be tried and convicted. But sure when
" a Man confesses the fact, this is sufficient Evidence, now here Mr. N--- owns the Affidavit to
" be Genuine, what would you have more ?, This needed no other answer, than to Represent the keen disposition of the Man to pronounce me guilty at any rate, when the plainest most Intelligible words cou'd be so grossly perverted for that purpose. But tho' the Generality of his own party seem'd at once sensible, what manifest wrong he did me in that invidious Turn he put upon to plain a matter, yet is it not surprizing, that when I was out of the Synod, another member of the Committee, of Shrewd Sense, of long Standing in the Church and *Experienc'd in Tryals himself*, shou'd Resume this of my owning the Affidavit to be genuine, and peremptorily insist that this was the same with owning it to be true ? What can be a Clearer Indication of the strange Influence of *Prejudice and Party-Zeal*, than the vehement contending for this point by one of that Character and figure ? Is it to be suppos'd he cou'd not see the difference between an Affidavit's being genuine, i. e. certainly made, and its being the whole truth ? Does not this plainly show, that he and all the Rest who often urg'd the same groundless mistake, must have had a strong Inclination to find me Guilty, when they believ'd that owning the Affidavit to be genuine, did amount to a full confession

confession of guilt? How little then their Judgment, that was so unaccountably warp'd by some prevailing Passion or another, is to be Relied on, and how little they must have had to say against me when they were driven to such poor shifts to find any handle to condemn me, must by this very Instance be made plain against all Exception to every unbiass'd Person. After all this work I must then be Removed, that the Synod might consider what was proper for 'em to do in this Affair. And no sooner was my back turn'd, but the Cry for a Censure became very vehement and general among that party, and when they were not able to stand before the overbearing force of the Arguments, which were advanc'd to show the absurdity and injustice of punishing a Man without condescending upon his crime, which had not as yet been done in my Case, they again and again pretended that I had own'd the very words in the *Affidavit*, and had avow'd 'em in their presence, as my principle: But the grossness of this Misrepresentation was Easily made appear, by mentioning the particular sense, in which I understood Blasphemy, when I pronounc'd the *Jews* not to be guilty of it, in Denying Christ to be God, and by putting the audience in mind of what I had so frequently repeated in their hearing, viz. That as blasphemy in general imports Reviling, or hurting the Reputation of another, the *Jews* might truly be said to Blaspheme Christ in Denying him to be God, *when he was properly and Essentially so*, the repetition of which words was at once starting fresh game to 'em. For dropping the motion of a Censure, they begin to vent their Jealousies and fears, that tho' they had heard as much from me as to Satisfy 'em I was no *Arian*, yet

yet they cou'd not but observe, I neither in the Letter nor in my Defence had us'd any Expression, to distinguish myself from being of Dr. Clarke's Principles. How unconvulsive a Way of Reasoning this is, that because I had not Expressly term'd Christ the Supreme God; therefore I did not believe him to be so, will be seen in my Answer to the Libel. But it was further observ'd on my Behalf, that it was scarce possible to use any Form of Expression, which it might not be pleaded, one, of the Doctor's Notions, might likewise make use of; when it was known that the Doctor had attempted to reconcile all the Expressions in the *Liturgy*, and particularly these in the *Athanasian and Nicene Creeds* to his Scheme of that Doctrine: And that if any Expression cou'd satisfie men, that I did not believe Christ to be only an *Inferior God*, and that by *Deputation and Office*, which some did alledge was the Doctor's Scheme, my owning him to be *Essentially God*, might as fully do it, as any other that cou'd be thought of. But it must not be Dissembled, that the Member who was always affecting to shew his great Understanding in the Doctor's Scheme, did roundly assert, that the Doctor wou'd not stop to use that Phrase taking it in this Sense, that in whatever Respect Christ is God, he might be said to be *Essentially so, because every thing is Essentially, whatever 'tis*. Whatever Doctor Clarke's Scheme may be, one thing I am sure of, it can't be shewn that ever he uses that Expression in such a manner, or that he has given any Occasion to suppose he cou'd fall into such an Ignorant Blunder about it. The Orthodox do often and justly distinguish between Christ's being God by *Essence or Essentially*, and

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b. Office or Deputation only, making these two perfectly Opposite and Distinct. And I dare challenge that Learned Member to shew any Orthodox Writer of Note and Distinction quarrelling with that Term and putting that Gloss upon it, as he has done, unless he will reckon the late ingenious Mr. Dugud such an one; who indeed in his wise & shrewd Remarks upon the Synod's printed Declaration 1721, does make much the same Judicious Criticism, and says, The Belfast Declaration sets forth only that the Son of God is a Deity as far as his Essential Nature and Perfections and necessary Existence absolutely will allow him-----I am sorry the words Absolute and Essential are so oft made Use of, even in one Line of Purpose to blind the Eyes of the People; for to assert Christ's Essential Deity or his Essential Divine Perfections, particularly his necessary Existence, absolute Eternity and Independence, is nothing at the Bottom but to say that Christ is Necessarily and Absolutely what he is, which may be said of any of God's Creatures.

Upon this Occasion however it was strongly urged, that I shou'd be call'd upon to declare my Belief of the Supreme Deity of Christ, but all that was offered on that Head at this time, and a great deal more was advanc'd in Support of the 5th Observation made by the Committee in their Grounds of Offence, and there that Point will be fully Consider'd. And I need only take Notice of what they resolved upon in order to bring this matter into some regular Way of being Issued, which in Short was this, The party who appear'd so very Zealous to support the first Motion against me, finding themselves at a Loss to ascertain the Grounds of their Offence, or to point out the Expressions in the Letter, or in my Extem-
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pore Defence of it, which cou'd with any Show of Justice be made matter of Procels against me before the Synod, moved that a Committee might be appointed to draw up and receive the Grounds of Offence that were taken at me. And accordingly such were chosen for that Purpose as had conceived and testified the strongest Prejudice against me. But how unfair and partial a Contrivance this was must easily appear: For it cou'd not but be supposed, such men were in a Disposition to exaggerate every Matter, and put every thing in the most disadvantageous Light, and that whatever their *Resentment* cou'd suggest, would be brought in as Matter of *Offence* against me: And so the Event shew'd. By which means the Synod was drawn in to brangle about their far stretch'd and imaginary Consequences, as if they were great and real Offences. If these Members had taken upon 'em the Character of *Accusers*, they were the only fit Persons to have form'd their own Libel. But *as* they were in the Nature of a Committee for that End, they were only the Synod's Servants, and what they did was to be adopted by the Synod as their Libel against me. If that *Venerable Assembly* had joyn'd some Unprejudic'd Persons, who cou'd have judg'd calmly and impartially of the whole Affair, they had saved 'emselfes of a great deal of Trouble, and me a great part of my present Complaints: But the Party carried all before them. They had determin'd with 'emselfes, how they wou'd treat me, and therefore wou'd let none but those of their own Spirit and Temper be made Members of the Committee: For this might have spoil'd their Design against me. But now when they had it wholly in their own hands, they were sure it cou'd

not miscary. And they accordingly did not fail to answer the Expectation very fully of such as made the Motion. For next Morning they brought in the Following Libel,

ARTICLES exhibited against Mr. Nevin.

The following Brethren Masters *Samuel Henry, William Gray, Thomas Kennedy, Gilbert Kennedy, Robert Mc-Bride* and *William Boyd*, who were appointed by this Synod to receive and draw up the Grounds of Offence taken by many at several things contained in a printed Letter of the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Nevin* just now published and Publickly owned by him Directed to the Rev'd Mr. *William Smith* of *Bakee*; Together with such other Expressions as he dropt in Defence of said Letter, do with Concern observe,

FIRST, That he gives us an account page 3 of an Affidavit made by *William Hannington, Thomas Kennedy, Solomon Mc-Bride*, in which said Persons depones that said Mr. *Nevin* did positively say in or about December 1723, that it is no Blasphemy to say that *Christ* is not God. The Genuineness of which Deposition Mr. *Nevin* freely acknowledged before the Synod; we beg leave to observe, that said Words are highly dishonourable to our great Redeemer, who with the Father and Holy Ghost is the one true God over all Blessed for ever; and therefore a just Ground of Offence to many.

SECONDLY, We beg leave to observe, that the Evasion made in his Letter page 5 viz. that he only said that it was no Blasphemy in them (viz. the Jews) to deny *Christ* to be God, is utterly incon-

consistent with the Truth of what is deposed by said Persons ; for if it be true that he only said it was no Blasphemy in the Jews to say Christ is not God, then the above Proposition sworn by them cannot be true, *viz.* that he said that it is no Blasphemy to say that Christ is not God ; for as he represents it he limited it expressly to the Jews, they swear that he expressed it indefinitely or universally, *viz.* that it is *NO Blasphemy* to say that Christ is not God, and consequently it is *NO Blasphemy* in any Person whatsoever to say so ; which necessarily reduces us to that unhappy Dilemma, *viz.* either to question the Truth of Mr. Nevin's Evasion, or to deny the Veracity of said three Deponents.

THIRDLY, We beg leave to observe, that he makes a Distinction of Blasphemy into that which is condemned in Scripture, and that which comes within the Sphere of Human Laws ; and he asserts, page 8, that *what he said must be understood only of that sort and degree of Blasphemy which justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws.* Now this to us seems inconsistent even with Mr. Nevin's own Evasion page 5 where are these words, that *then it was urged, was it not Blasphemy in them viz. the Jews to deny Christ to be God ; to which, says Mr. Nevin, I answered and doubt not repeated it again that it was no Blasphemy in them to deny Christ to be God :* Which repeated Assertion is delivered in such Universal Terms as does not admit of such a Restriction as is mentioned by Mr. Nevin above ; for if it was *NO Blasphemy* in the Jews, then Consequently *not that kind of Blasphemy* condemned in Scripture more than *that sort of Blasphemy* which justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws.

FOURTHLY,

FOURTHLY, We beg leave to observe, that the Words even as explain'd by him seem to us so sound harsh in pious Ears especially from a Gospel Minister.

FIFTHLY, We beg leave to observe, that tho' he owns page 10th he made a Confession of our Savior's Deity before the General Synod 1721, yet he says, *that for his part he is sorry that ever he gave Way to it, and shall for the Future take care that no Temptation whatsoever shall make him venture so far again.*

SIXTHLY, We beg leave to observe, that through the whole of his Letter he speaks with what seems to us an Unbecoming Air, not treating the important Subject of Conversation with that Gravity and Seriousness that becomes a Gospel Minister ; but contrary to the Rules of the Gospel, Offers railing and undecent Expressions to his Majesty's Justice of the Peace, page 9 ; As also to the Gentleman who upon Oath had declar'd what had passed in conversation between them, as also Burlesquing the holy Scriptures p. 6 in these Words, *and vexed his righteous Soul: in Fine,* his ludicrous way of mentioning the common Confession of this Church, calling it by way of Ridicule, the *darling Confession*. All which being published by himself to the World, if not resented by us, we cannot free ourselves from being Partakers with him in his Sin. Thus they,

This was no sooner Read, but Complaint was made by several hands, that the Committee therein had gone out of their Sphere, and greatly exceeded their Commission, and this gives me Occasion to insert the Minute drawn up by the Synod from the first Motion of this Affair to the appointing and giving Instructions to their Committee.

mittee. For this will serve to confirm the main parts of the preceeding Narrative, and is Necessary to Illustrate what Ground there was for charging the Committee in this manner. It is as follows,

" *Die Mercur. Hor : 11 ante Merid : June 17th.*

" A Motion was made by Mr. *Samuel Henry*,
 " that whereas a Paper is published, bearing
 " Mr. *Thomas Nevin's* name, as if it had been
 " emitted by him, which said paper gives an Ac-
 " count of an *Affidavit* made before one of His
 " Majesty's Justices of the Peace, by three
 " Persons, viz. Mr. *William Hannington, Thomas*
 " *Kennedy* and *Solomon Mc-Bride*, in these words,
 " *We do declare that about December 1723 Mr.*
 " *Nevin was at the House of Captain William Han-*
 " *nington in Monyrea, When and where much*
 " *being said concerning the Magistrate's Power in*
 " *punishing Offenders against the second Table of the*
 " *Law, Mr. Nevin did positively say, that it is*
 " *no Blasphemy to say Christ is not God. (These*
 " *Affidavits were made at Cumbar, May 27.*
 " *1724).* The above named Mr. *Henry* de-
 " clared, that he had not Freedom to sit in
 " Synod with Mr. *Nevin* till he give
 " Satisfaction as to the Matter charged upon
 " him in the abovesaid *Affidavit*, and many o-
 " ther Members of this Synod joyned with
 " Mr. *Henry* in making the same Declaration.
 " Mr. *Nevin* owned that he had published
 " the abovesaid printed Paper, but declared
 " that his Intention by the above Proposition,
 " is, that it was no Blasphemy in the Jews to say
 " that Christ is not God, that is, that the Jews
 " ought not to be knock'd on the Head or punished Ca-
 " pitally

“ pitally by the Laws of the Land for saying so ; and
 “ that as Blasphemy in general imports the hurting
 “ or blasting the Reputation of another, no Doubt in
 “ this Sense the Jews may be said to blaspheme Christ
 “ in denying him to be God.

“ It was then moved that Mr. *Nevin* shou’d
 “ remove till this Synod consider what is proper
 “ for them to do upon the whole Affair : And
 “ this Motion was opposed by others. And it
 “ was farther moved, that the Paper published by
 “ Mr. *Nevin*, shou’d be Read ; and after long
 “ Reasoning, this was agreed to, and the
 “ Paper was read accordingly, and this Matter
 “ was refer’d to next *Sederunt*.

“ *June 17th Hor. 4ta post Merid.*

“ Mr. *Nevin*’s Affair was resum’d, and it was
 “ moved that he shou’d withdraw, and he with-
 “ drew accordingly ; and the Judgment of se-
 “ veral Members was ask’d as to the manner of
 “ Trying and Issuing this Affair ; and after Rea-
 “ soning, it was mov’d and agreed to, that
 “ the Members who have taken Offence at Mr.
 “ *Nevin*’s Words uttered by him before this Sy-
 “ nod, or contained in his printed Paper own’d
 “ by himself, shall draw up in Writing the said
 “ Matters or Words that are Offensive, and pre-
 “ sent a Draught of them at our next *Sederunt*,
 “ and particularly Mr. *Samuel Henry*, Mr. *William*
 “ *Gray*, Mr. *William Boyd*, Mr. *Mc-Bride*, Mr.
 “ *Thomas Kennedy* and Mr. *Gilbert Kennedy* are
 “ to meet as a Committee to draw up said Words
 “ in Writing : But at the same time said Members
 “ shall not be accounted for so doing as Accusers
 “ of Mr. *Nevin*, or be precluded from giving
 “ Judgment in this Affair. Besides

Besides what is Evident from the Express words of this minute, that they were only to draw up in writing such words of mine as they had taken offence at, and had been uttered by me before this Synod, or were contained in the printed Paper, and yet, as is observ'd in my Answer, instead of these they had brought in their own Reasonings and consequences from them ; it was also complain'd of, that the whole affair was now brought in before the Synod, when yet it had been agreed to on all hands, that the matters of fact relating to the conversation at *Monyrean* ; and consequently the *Affidavit* that was Grafted upon it, cou'd not by any means be made ground of process against me at present, when I wanted my Evidences that were absolutely necessary for my Defence ; and that therefore when every one was Sensible of this, as the only view in Appointing the Committee, so their only proper business was, to draw up in writing such of my words as were so offensive to 'em, as to make 'em scruple sitting in Synod with me, and consequently these cou'd be only such, as cou'd be regularly Judg'd by the Synod. For that it were evidently unjust to think of Excluding me, from being a Member of the Synod ; for what cou'd only be brought to Tryal afterwards before another Judicatory. And that what the Committee had done was rather the forming a *Libel*, which cou'd only be prosecuted before the Presbytery of *Down*, than drawing up what was proper to come under the Cognizance of the Synod, with a view to support the first motion made against me. To which the Committee Replied, that they were Intrusted to draw up

in form Every offence 'emselfes or others had taken at me, and they Left it to the Synod to Determine, what part of their Draught did come Regularly before 'em, and what part was fit to be Refer'd to the Presbytery of Down; And in the mean time Desir'd to have the Question put, Approve the Diligence of the Committee or not? They knew their Strength, and made Light of Every thing, which cou'd be said to lay open the danger of this Vote. When it was taken notice of that this afterwards might be Easily Construed, as Determining all the Articles they had drawn up against me to be Relevant, or Just matter of accusation; and that this was to approve 'em too hastily and in an Implicite manner, before the particular observations they had made, were duly and Impartially consider'd: They were so good indeed as to Insert a qualifying clause into the Minute, by which they Appear'd to provide well Enough against the first Inconveniency: But they wou'd not run the Hazard of Delaying their being Approv'd, till Particulars came to be Enquir'd into. They were sufficiently appriz'd, that this were to lay 'emselfes open to the Last, if any of their Observations shou'd be found to be made contrary to Justice and Charity, they were Resolv'd to screen 'emselfes from every Imputation of that Kind, by this previous Vote; and tho' others saw thro' their Design well enough, and moved that the Vote might be put, Approve the Minute or not? declaring that they Cou'd approve the Diligence of the Committee in no other Sense than that they had miss'd nothing which cou'd in any manner of way be Pretended to be Offensive in my
Letter

Letter or Defence of it before the Synod. But this wou'd not be hearken'd to, and the first Question was put, that it might Run roundly in favour of the Committee ; as it appears plainly by the form of the Minute on this point, which is in these words, " Then it was moved that " the Question be put, *approve the diligence of " the Committee, or not ?* And that Question being put it carried *approve, Nemine Contradicente.* " But the Synod does not declare these Articles " to be Relevant till Mr. *Nevin* be called to be " heard upon them. „ But with what Justice it cou'd be said, it carried *approve Nemine Contradicente*, when severals Voted only approve the Minute, and had openly declared that their Sense thereof, was, that they Reserved to themselves a Liberty to remark upon any thing that might appear in the Committee's Observations without colour of Reason or Justice, must be Explain'd by such as fully Comprehend that Emphatical phrase of *Nemine Contradicente*. But it is plain from what the Members, who Voted in this manner, say on this head in the Reason of their Protestation, they were far from thinking that they did not contradict by their voice the approving the Committee's Diligence. If that term of Ecclesiastical Art be able to bear out this Consistently with truth, I must say 'tis an useful one with a Witness.

The following minute gives an account in what manner I obtain'd a Copy of the Committee's Observations against me, which is in these words, " Mr. N--- Demanded a Copy of the " above Draught that he may prepare for his " Defence. Mr. *Wm. Boyd* is allow'd to dictate " said paper to him, to which Mr. N--- agreed, " and this affair is to be consider'd in the first

place to morrow Morning.

The time allow'd to prepare an answer to such a paper must appear very short : But some were so uneasy to be detain'd from the agreeable work of Demolishing me and the unguarded Letter, as they took pleasure in calling it, that they cou'd not think of waiting so long a time : And therefore one made a motion, that had something very pretty in the Exact proportion of it, and which on that account was look'd upon by him as Reasonable and Just, *viz.* that I shou'd have the same precise length of time to make Ready my Defence, which the Committee had taken in drawing up the paper against me. But another insisted upon obliging me to make my Defence immediatly after Noon, tho' the Clerk openly told, he cou'd not sooner than that very time give me a Copy of the Minute, which he was order'd to do, to direct and assist me in preparing my answer.

It may be thought that there is no occasion to be so particular in such trifling motions and circumstances. But I must beg leave to tell the Reader, that without giving a very distinct view of these and such like hardships either actually or design'd to be put upon me, it will not be possible for any to form a right notion of the keen spirit that was discover'd thro' the whole prosecution, or of the disadvantages I labor'd under, durin the Course of this tedious tryal, especially in preparing my answer to so large a Libel. And with this view I must observe, that at the time prefix'd, there was a message brought me to attend the Synod, and upon my sending word I had not finished my answer to the Libel, they Enter'd the following order in-
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to their Minutes. ' The Synod having appointed
" that the Complaint tabled against Mr. N—
" shou'd be consider'd in the first place at this
" *sederunt* sent to call him, and he wrote to
" the Moderator signifying that he is not ready
" as yet to make his Defence, and desiring a
" little more time to prepare for it. This mat-
" ter was Referr'd. „ But in the afternoon not
only the ordinary Messenger, but a very Zeal-
ous member must, one after another, be dispatch-
ed to summon me, and the member want-
ed to know in the Moderator's name
what I was doing, and if I was near Ready.
His Design, as it appear'd to me, was to make
some Close Remarks, if I were in good Ear-
nest preparing an answer, or only shuffling
off the time. For the party was so full of it
they cou'd think of nothing else, till this was
over, and so strangely persuaded I must sink under
the Charge, that they cou'd not Imagine, I shou'd
be able to make any thing of a tolerable Defence.

However in a few hours after, I appear'd
in Synod with my papers in my hand, and
as soon as I had access to speak, told the
Moderator, Since they were in such haste to
push on my Affair, I was willing to read my
Defence in all the Confusion it must be in,
having written near Six Sheets of paper in so
small a Compass of time, so that I was oblig-
ed to write as fast as the thoughts came into
my Head, and had not leisure so much as once
to read it over, after it was finished. But
it being now late, and the Party very sick of
an Extraordinary Affair they had been laboring
with all their might, viz, the discharging any
of their Members, and particularly the Rev'd.
Mr.

Mr. Patrick Simson to take the several Speeches of Members in Short hand.

By this means I got time till next Morning to review the Answer which I had drawn up in so great haste. In which time were also added the Remarks upon the pointed conclusion of their Paper. I am the more particular in describing these circumstances, that I may with the better grace bespeak the Candor of every one in forming a Judgement of my Answer. For sure if an allowance for smaller mistakes be due in any case, I well may claim some Indulgence for the unaccuracies of this performance, undertaken with such disadvantages, finished in a public house, full of Noise and Confusion, and now Published without any Alteration, lest there shou'd be a handle given to complain, as if I had made my cause better before the World than it appear'd before the Synod. The substance therefore and Justice of the Defence, I Expect will be chiefly Regarded, neither stile nor method view'd with too critical an Eye. My answer is as follows,

The ANSWER of Mr. Thomas Nevin to a paper, Intituled, Ground of Offence said to be taken by many at Several things, contain'd in a printed Letter of the Rev'd Mr. Thomas Nevin to the Rev'd Mr. William Smith of Ballee, together with such other Expressions as he dropt in Defence of said Letter, as they are drawn up by Masters Samuel Henry, William Gray, Thomas Kennedy, Gilbert Kennedy, Robert Macbride, and William Boyd.

The Defence I am to make at present is principally to shew how far the several Grounds of Offence alledged are now Cognizable by this Synod, or how far even such of 'em as shall be allowed cognizable here, are Relevant,
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as Sufficient to Justify the *first Motion*, which was made in this Affair. And therefore to keep the present case in Debate in the true point of view, 'tis Necessary to lay Down these preliminary Observations,

1st. That this matter was Introduced into the Synod by the Rev'd Mr *Samuel Henry*, after this manner, that what was contain'd in the Affidavit made by *William Hannyngton*, *Thomas Kennedy* and *Solomon Macbride*, wherein they Declare that in or about *December, 1723*. Mr. *Thomas Nevin* was at the House of Capt. *William Hannyngton* in *Monyre*, when and where much being said Concerning the Magistrate's Power in punishing Offenders against the SECOND TABLE OF THE LAW, the said Mr. *Nevin* did positively say, that 'tis no Blasphemy to say, Christ is not God, was such Offence to him that he had not freedom to sit in Synod with me, until I gave Satisfaction as to the matter charged on me in the above Affidavit, and with him many other Members of the Synod concurr'd in making the same Declaration, as appears from the Minute relating to this Affair. From which Authentic Representation of the true Rise of this Matter, it is Evident, that the Design of the Motion was at first, and is express'd in so many Words, that Mr. *Henry* and those other Members, who Joyn'd in the same Declaration were not free to sit in Synod with me, till I had given Satisfaction in a Cause, which Every one must, and I am confident the Synod will own is not Cognizable here. By this means then I must be Excluded from being a Member of the Synod, which is my undoubted Right and Priviledge, and consequent-

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ly be put under a penalty of a very high Nature, affecting my Character greatly in the eye of the World, and with equal justice my Exercising all the other branches of the Ministerial Office, upon a fame, which neither is nor can be tryed by the Synod *in the present scituation*, what is this then, but that I shou'd be punish'd before I be heard? that I shou'd pass with the World as guilty, before my Crime is proved upon me? Does not the very Motion carry all this in it, which yet must appear so plain an Infraction of the Rules of Discipline establish'd by our Glorious Redeemer in his Church, and so contrary to the Eternal Laws of natural Equity, that he who Runs may read it? Did not the Church of Scotland treat a Learned Professor of Divinity accused of *Socinianism, Jesuitism* and many other Dangerous Errors in quite another Manner? Did they suspend him from officiating in that high Important Post, wherein he might have done unspeakable Injury, had he been guilty, by instilling such pernicious Principles into the minds of the students Design'd for the Ministry, till he wou'd give Satisfaction as to the matters charged on him? Did any one scruple in that Church to sit with him as a Member in either Presbytery or Synod, till he shou'd do so?

Did ever *his accuser* insist upon any such *censure* to be inflicted on him? Would not such a Motion have been rejected with indignation by that Church from which *many affect to draw all their Rules and Precedents*? and why should they depart from her known practice, and established form of Process, in my case, when the Grounds of Offence can never be pretended to be any way

way parallel? Is there any particular Error charged on me, and yet there were very grievous ones, undertaken to be prov'd against him? Does any Accuser offer himself to make good those Grounds of Offence, which are only eccho'd about by common Fame, or form'd in mens *frightn'd Imaginations*, and yet a Reverend Minister appear'd as Accuser, against that Learn'd Professor, and offer'd to bring Evidence of all he alledg'd against him? Did the Assembly, or other Judicatories of that Venerable Church, desire him to make any Declarations against the Errors, he was charged with, or pretend, they could not have Satisfaction of his being innocent of these vile Opinions, unless he submitted to some *Inquisitory Methods*? And shall I be treated as one, who have forfeited my Priviledge of being a Member of this Synod, and of continuing to exercise my Ministerial Office, when no Accuser appears against me, no Crime but an imaginary one, the Effect of mens *mighty Skill*, in *smelling out some lurking Heresie*, and in *drawing Consequences from groundless Jealousies and Suspicions*, is pretended against me? And yet I have been told once and again, that nothing will end this Matter, but my making a Declaration of the Supreme Deity of Christ; I am assured that speaking these few Words, will do it all at once. And pray what Connection has this with the *Frightful Affidavit*, or any thing in my Letter, only that I have not used that Phrase, which is by some, under a very great Mistake, apprehended to be the only Unexceptionable Evidence of a mans being *Orthodox in that grand Point*? Have I given Offence then by what I have not said? Was there any manner of Handle given me, by the *Affidavit*, to mention the Supreme

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Deity of Christ, when all that is alleaged in it, is, that I positively said, It is no Blasphemy to deny Christ to be God, without any Hint, as if this Point, of his being the Supreme God, had been disputed among us: Nor was there indeed the least Mention of any such thing, in that Conversation. By this Rule of judging, the *excellent Confession*, since I mayn't call it the *darling* one, may be condemn'd itself. For I don't remember that the Expression of the Supreme Deity of Christ, is to be found there, more than in *my Letter*. One thing I can assure this Synod of, and the World too, that I entertain no Notions about *Blasphemy*, as it is a Crime that justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws, but what I had form'd upon a strict impartial Search into that Matter, long before it was possible for me, to dip into the Controversy, that Men are so uneasy about, and such in my Apprehension, as are very *consistent with the firmest Belief* of **THE SUPREME DEITY OF CHRIST.**

In the *II^d* Place, I wou'd observe, that this Motion was only founded at first, upon the *Affidavit*, of which there is an Account given in a Paper, published bearing my Name, and that till there was Satisfaction given, as to the Matter therein charg'd on me, Mr. *Henry* and others had not Freedom, to sit with me in the Synod: (How preposterous, how injurious a Method this is, Let every one judge from my first Observation.) But now, not only the *Affidavit*, but several things contained in a printed Letter of mine, together with such other Expressions, as I dropt in this Synod in Defence of said Letter, must be dragg'd in, to fill up *the Measure of Offence* taken by Several against me. Here then it
must

must be evident, that these several Grounds of Offence, great and small, Cognizable here, or not, contain'd in the printed Letter, or in my Defence of it, must all be bro't to support the first Motion, that I am not to sit in Synod with my offended Brethren, till I give Satisfaction, as to the Matter charg'd on me in the *Affidavit*. If Men by the Reasoning which has been on this Head in open Synod, are convinced, that it is neither just nor practicable, to bring that Matter into Judgment now; and that since, this cannot be done, it were no way agreeable to a righteous Procedure, to *censure and inflict a Penalty* on me, before I am formally convicted; therefore other Grounds of Offence, not hinted at in the *first Motion*, but some even Posterior to it, must be raised up to support and justify it. What shall I think? is this the very self same Motion, which was made against me to my Face, and in my Hearing? If different Grounds of Offence, if dropping the first only Ground that was mention'd before, as I am persuaded, it will be found, the Synod must, be not putting the Motion on quite another Foot, and altering it entirely, I know not what is. With what Justice this is done, I can appeal to all, who have been in the least acquainted with the Proceedings of this Synod, before our present Prosecutions began. Here are Grounds of Offence, not only distinct, from what were contain'd in the first Motion, but such as I had never Opportunity to answer to, and such as the *Severals* offended at me, know not but I might have satisfied them in, if they had ever been mention'd to me: But it seems these were kept in Reserve, and if the first Motion wou'd not do, they must be all cast in together,

ther, to make up an *Accumulative Offence*, sufficient to draw on me the *design'd and premeditated Censure*. But pray, why must Expressions dropt by me, in Defence of the Letter, be given in Charge by the Minute, to those Reverend Brethren, and be mention'd by them too, in the Title of their Paper, as Grounds of Offence, when there is not any single one condescended upon, or referr'd to by them, as a Ground of Offence? Let them point out any distinct Expressions, from what are really contain'd in the printed Letter, and then I shall own, that these were justly given by the Synod, and mention'd by the Reverend Committee, as a distinct Ground of Offence: And sure, since those who have with so much Art, stretch'd a great Number of Expressions in my printed Paper, have yet observ'd nothing, upon any such dropp'd by me in said Defence; Is not this a plain Indication, they could get none such to lay hold on, nor find any thing that was exceptionable in said Defence, while yet they have set this up, in the Title of their Paper, as what contain'd *Grounds of Offence*?

III^{dly} I would observe, that abstracting from what is contain'd in the *Affidavit*, most of the *Grounds of Offence*, receiv'd and drawn up against me, are all Consequences, wire-drawn indeed from my Letter, by taking distant Scraps, and patching them together, by forcing a Sense on my Words, which I had guarded against in the Letter, and expressly disclaim'd in the Defence, as appears by a Paper, given under my Hand, and inserted into the Minute. And shall I need to display the Unfairness of such Treatment either to Men or Books? What man can guard against others taking

taking Offence, at several things, he may print or say, if this be Just and Equitable? And I cannot forbear applying to this Purpose what I said concerning the *barbarous Way*, taken by the *Affidavit*, to fix a Crime upon me p. 7. of my Letter; What a sad Hand might be made of the Bible itself at this Rate? "Heresy and Blasphemy, might by such Proceedings, be father'd upon that Fountain of Truth, and the Daring Confession too, made the Spring of many an Error". And that yet, this is the very Method observ'd, in drawing up these Grounds of Offence against me, will afterwards appear, in as *flagrant Instances*, as any to be met with, in the most angry Controversial Writings, which have been the Occasion of the too well founded Proverb, which is shortly thus express'd in Latin, **ODIUM THEOLOGICUM.**

Lastly, I would observe, that there seems to be, a very unkind Return for the Frankness, and honest Openness of Mind, I us'd with my Brethren on this Occasion. Whenever Mr. Henry had made his Motion, I determin'd with myself, to do every thing I cou'd, with a *safe Conscience*, to remove the Offence, which he and others declar'd, they had taken at the *Affidavit*, contain'd in the printed Letter. And therefore, when he did not pretend that he could prove me the Author of it, I freely own'd I was. And yet if I had taken the Advantage, of demanding his or any other's proving, that it was mine, they would not have found it so easy a Matter, to have procur'd on the Spot, what wou'd have amounted to a *full and satisfying Evidence*. And did not I declare my Sense of what was the only matter of Offence to him, in such a clear and un-

unreserved Manner, that this Reverend Brother, acknowledg'd with so much good Nature, that for his Part, he was satisfied, that tho' I remonstrated against his not observing Christ's noble Law, in the Case of Offence, by speaking first to myself, yet own'd he had now acted the Part, and shewn the Spirit of a Christian? But I soon found, others were not satisfied, and was given to understand, that unless I would purge myself of a *Suspicion of Clarkianism*, for which there was not pretended the least imaginable Ground, that I now remember, I must expect no Quarters, but the utmost Severity and Rigour. And accordingly, after many Hours Debate in my Absence, this Method was fix'd upon, that the Members, who have taken Offence, at Mr. Nevin's Words, utter'd by himself before this Synod, or contain'd in his printed Letter, shall draw up in Writing said Words. What then have these Members done? Are the Words, utter'd by myself, or contain'd in the printed Letter, what these Reverend Gentlemen have bro't against me? No! with a great deal of Art, and all their Skill in Reasoning, they have endeavour'd to represent the *Affidavit*, as *fixing Words upon me, highly dishonourable to our great Redeemer, who with the Father and Hol, Ghost, is the one true God over all blessed for ever*; they charge me, as *flying to an Evasion, the Truth whereof, they are reduc'd by an unhappy Dilemma, to question*; as *inconsistent with myself, in the Use of that very Evasion*; as *giving an Explanation, which seems to sound harsh in Pious Ears*; treating the important Subject, with an *unbecoming Air*; and without that Gravity and Seriousness, which becomes a Gospel-Minister; offering *Railing, and indecent Expressions*; *Burlesquing the*

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Scriptures, and mentioning in a *ludicrous Way*, the common Confession of this Church. Can there be a more frightful Character given of any man? And could more direct Methods be taken, to ruine any one's Capacity of Usefulness in the Ministry? Is this the way of treating a Brother, the Gospel enjoyns? Are a mans Words to be tortur'd in such an unmerciful way, to confess such dreadful Enormities against him? Is this the Charity that thinketh no Evil? Are scandalous Immoralities themselves exaggerated, and treated in this Manner when under Prosecution among us? Does even the Suspicion of them, hinder some to live in Communion, till there is Satisfaction given? What Reparation, shall these Receivers and Drawers of the Grounds of Offence, taken at me, be oblig'd to make, if all their Charge be found forc'd and groundless? If I am innocent in the Eye of my Lord and Judge, will not this be regarded by him, as beating their Fellow-Servant? What will unbyas'd Spectators, what will an unprejudic'd World think, if this present Prosecution appear upon my Defence, to be without any sufficient Ground or Cause? Have they taken the Gospel-method, with a mistaken Brother, in the only Point, have espous'd and maintain'd, in the Subject that has made so much Noise? Have not I call'd upon the Synod to convince me, by fair Reasoning, that it is an Error? But has ever one Argument been offer'd to me on this Head? and yet must this be bro't as ground of Offence? Was this the way the Apostles treated a weak and erring Brother? What shall I do in this Case? If my Principle be condemn'd, as sounding harsh in pious Ears, the Vote of the Synod must enlighten me, and make me think

think as they do, not only *without Conviction*, but even against what appears to me, supported by the strongest and most irrefragable Arguments. A fine Pass indeed we are bro't to, if some mens Schemes must take Place !

But now I come to the LIBEL itself, and shall consider it in the View propos'd, at the same time taking Liberty, to expose the Weakness of the *pretended Reasoning* in it, and to show how insufficient, even those Grounds of Offence are, which I presume can with *no manner of Justice*, be tried here. And all I would say to prevent any Mistake, or Ambiguity, about what is the general Cry against me, *viz. that many are offended, or have taken Offence*, at several things spoken and printed by me, is just to state the true Scriptural Notion of Offence ; which in short I take to be this, whatsoever doth in its own Nature lead or incline our Brother to forsake the Christian Faith, or embrace any Error contrary to it ; or to practise any thing, which is ruinous to our own Souls, may be justly accounted also, a Stumbling-block, or Offence laid in his way. Thus then unless I have committed something which is of an infectious Nature, or vented some Principle, which may tempt others to depart from the Christian Faith, or embrace any Error contrary to it, I can never be supposed to offend in such a manner, as any of my Brethren can have just Ground to scruple Sitting with me in this Synod. Sure, if there be found only some *Weakness* or *Imprudence* in my Conduct, or *Mistake* which is no way dangerous, and no more, the present Prosecution will appear *unwarrantable and unbrotherly*. For, if these Matters be such Ground of Offence, I doubt

doubt if any Two of this Synod, can ever have freedom to sit together, or Joyn in any religious Communion. What Infirmities do many discover ? What Imprudencies and palpable Mistakes do many fall into, even in the Face of this Synod ? And yet does *the most tender, most scrupulous, or easiest offended Brother*, declare he has no Freedom to sit in Synod with such ? Have I forfeited all Right to the like Indulgence, from those who are not out of the need of it themselves ? Now, if all I can say, shou'd not make me appear *perfectly innocent* in their Eyes ; That yet no more at least, can come to be Judged on the Spot, which even those who think *most hardly* of me, can pronounce otherwise of, I hope will appear from my Replies to the several Observations made by that *Reverend Committee*.

Their first Observation rests wholly on this, That an *Affidavit*, of which there was an Account given by me, p. 3. of the Printed Letter, which I had own'd to be genuine, contains words that are *highly dishonourable to our great Redeemer*, and therefore gave just Ground of Offence to many. And whatever Ground of offence some might fancy within themselves, was given by these Words, must now be strengthened by the *Authority and Judgment of these Reverend Divines*. But it is Matter of Admiration to me, if this Treatment of a Brother, be not matter of much greater Offence to all, who are able to see thro' this present Affair, than any Thing I have said or done in it.

For don't they know, that these Words Abstractedly and *Indefinitely* spoken, are utterly denied by me ? Don't they take Notice themselves,

selves, that I have made this Defence ? were they not conscious to themselves, that I had spoken Only of Blasphemy, as a legal Crime ? And yet at the first Dash, without any Regard to this, they Insinuate, that these Words were spoken by me, in such a manner, as to be *Dis-honourable to our great Redeemer*. Shou'd they not have waited, till they had considered my Defences, and when they had exposed them, only as Evasive and inconsistent, it was Time enough, to pronounce this so roundly of me ? But dare they say, that my Sense of the Words is *Dishonourable to our great Redeemer* ? Have I not own'd in the Letter, that in the sense in which they only can thus Judge of them, they are *really Dishonourable* to him, calling the *Arian Error* a pernicious one, and owning that the Jews and all others *think meanly and wickedly of our Saviour, when they deny him to be God* ? Nay, did I not say more, in my Defence before the Synod, that any Christian who *denied Jesus to be God*, might be Excluded from *Church Communion* : and now let Candour speak ; let Impartiality Judge between the Reverend Committee and me, if this was observing the Golden Rule of Equity ; that in such a peremptory way, it should be assign'd as one of the Grounds of Offence taken at me, when I had in such a publick manner declar'd, that it never entred into my Tho't, that the Jews were not *injurious to our Blessed Lord, reviling and robbing him of what essentially belong'd to him, when they denied him to be God*, and so in *that sense* might be said to *Blaspheme* him.

Perhaps their next Observation, they may be apt to imagine, will remove all Ground of Com-
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plaint on this Head, when they call what I had said to explain my sense of that Proposition, an Evasion; and observe that confining it to THE JEWS, what is sworn by these Persons cannot be true, that they swear I express'd it indefinitely and universally, and therefore must question the Truth of what they call my Evasion, or deny the veracity of said three Deponents. But if ever Prejudice, was more manifestly discover'd in the Formation of a Libel, I shall despair to be able to prove the most evident and undoubted Truth; for

1st. What can be more injurious, or partial, than to call what I say p. 5. "*that I said it was no Blasphemy in them; viz. the Jews, to deny Christ to be God, an Evasion?*" This is an invidious Term, by which no less is meant, than some little shift, or slight of Hand, to keep Truth out of Sight. And in this case must imply no less, than that there was no Mention of the Jews, no Respect to, word or words confining it to them, the Jews, in That Conversation, and consequently that this in an ar-
rant Falshood, just forg'd to cover me from this heavy Imputation. Let the Reverend Committee look into their own Breasts, and Judge what Sense they would have of such a foul Practice? Do they think, I have no Remains of honesty, and Conscience; but that I wou'd prostitute these MAIN FOUNDATIONS of my Peace and Comfort, to screen me from little popular Fury, or their keenest Censure? Have not told them, and all the World, that this person'd Arrow in all its Strength, is not able to wound in the Part they aim at, i, e, taking it in the full Force, in which it appears, in this im-
perfect

perfect *Affidavit*, it being even there, manifestly spoken of what must come within the Magistrate's Power to punish, can never prove me an ARIAN? For I put all my reputation upon it, that whenever this matter comes to be fully examin'd, it shall be found that in that very Conversation, I express'd myself in such a manner, as sufficiently guarded against any Suspicion of my *denying the Divinity of Christ*, myself. And is there any such mighty matter when once I am safe from any Imputation of that Error, that I should be tempted to use such an *Evasion* as the *Kind Committee* lays to my door, that I have hatcht a *down-right falsehood*, that under its shelter I might Escape from the frightful danger I was in? How would they resent any such charge against themselves? And how can they Judge it an *Evasion* in a Case which every one must be Sensible is far from being set in such a full and satisfying light before the World, that it's possible for them or any other to be certain whether this be matter of Fact or not? Let it provoke them as much as it please, I can't help telling them, that I abhor *lying* or any such *Evasion*, as much as the most unexceptionable among them.

But in the next place, I must now do Justice to them, that they have not spared to speak out this Imputation *more roundly*, when they alledge this is utterly inconsistent with what is Sworn, and that they are "*necessarily reduc'd to that unhappy Dilemma either to question the Truth of Mr. Nevin's Evasion, or deny the veracity of the three Deponents* : „ And which they incline to do, is not obscurely hinted.

The manner of Expression is somewhat remarkable ; An *Evasion* which consists of a *Mat-*

ter of *Fact*, that is plainly insinuated not to be true, is but another Term for a *lye*. If I did not mention the *J E W S*, and give them as the particular Instance wherein it was not *Blasphemy to deny Christ to be God*, no doubt *Evasion* was a word soft Enough : But when there are such broad hints that they could not have been mention'd unless it be suppos'd that the *Deponents Swore falsely*, to call it in these Circumstances an *Evasion* can mean no less than a *formal lye*. But if it be made appear afterward that this is really *matter of Fact*, that the *J E W S* were mention'd in that Conversation with the Particular view so often declar'd, let all Impartial Men Judge, if this be not *Horrid abuse* of me, *Rank slander* and a *rash blasting* my Reputation. To assert this matter so bluntly even in the Gentlest Terms is *taking up an Evil report against a Brother* with a Witness, and perhaps some will not stop to call it more. But what is the mighty Ground upon which they venture so far ? why ! there are three Deponents whose veracity must be deny'd or the Truth of my *Evasion* (or in the sense the Committee must mean it, the truth of my *lye*) must be Call'd in question. But how came the Committee never to have the least regard to *Doctor Smith's Affidavit* ? Do's it not from thence appear that the *first one's veracity* is sorely pusht at ? About three Weeks or a Month after, He averr'd, He remembered not what was said on the Head of its being no *Blasphemy to deny Christ to be God*, and now at the End of almost *six Months*, He remembered it so as to swear it *indefinitely and universally*, if we may depend on the Committee. What, is this Gentleman of such happy endowments

dowments, that He can recal at so great a distance of time what He had lost the *Remembrance of so long before* ? And can the last one who Joyns in the *Affidavit* be of any weight, to reduce any to the *unhappy Dilemma* to question the *Truth* of my having spoken and meant the words of the J E W S, when He own'd so soon after the Conversation, that upon account of his going out and in, He did not know how the Conversation was brought in, or to what these words (the very same in the first *Affidavit*) related. Mayn't I have done for all he can know of the matter what with the Committee must pass for an *Evasion* ? And will any one be at a loss to know whose veracity to question or deny betwixt him and me, when he (with Truth) own'd so much, and yet has sworn that in said Conversation much was said about punishing Offenders against the second Table of the Law ? He heard this when He was going out and in, and yet did not know how the Conversation was brought in. As to the other Person concern'd in the *Affidavit*, and the three or four others who were all present at the Conversation I fear not, but they will be brought to own, I did Expressly mention the *Jews* using the very argument about them set down in the Printed Letter, and delivered myself so that I gave them no umbrage of my being an ARIAN. And therefore both for the sake of the Persons concern'd in the *Affidavit*, and for my own sake I must observe,

In the last place, How unfairly the Committee Deals with them in alledging that if I spake these words of the Case of the J E W S, and had respect to them in that assertion, that then what they have sworn cannot be true. I shew'd

more

more tenderness to them when I say p. 7. of my Letter " if this (meaning what they had sworn) be applied to the Particular case before us it's very true what they have sworn. " But it seems the Committee know their meaning better than I'm sure it can be gather'd from the words of the Affidavit, or else the Committee will never be able to account, for what they alledge, viz. *that they have sworn that I Express'd it, Indefinitely and universally.* For pray may it not be said that it is no *Blasphemy to say Christ is not God*, when it is only meant of a particular instance, and the most proper acceptation of the word, and which was no way question'd in the Company ? And let it be observed, with what shew of Reason it can be pleaded, that this was *sworn indefinitely and universally*, as reaching to all that may be called *Blasphemy*, in any Sense of the Word, when the Affidavit plainly insinuates, that it must be meant, of that Sort and Degree of Blasphemy, which is punishable by the Magistrate. It was his Power concerning which, much was said in that Conversation, and under that very Head it, appears from the Affidavit itself, this Assertion came in, let it relate to whom it will. And this with the Committee, is *Swearing a Point indefinitely and universally*, when it can only be meant, of what they must own is only *one sort of the Crime*, and *one Sense of the Word*. And here let all their Logick bring them off, if it can. Was not this Observation made to their Hand, and don't they take notice of it, upon another Occasion ? And yet with such glaring light before them, to pronounce it is *sworn indefinitely, and universally*, must at Least look like very great

great Inadvertency. Sure, if my own Account of the *Conversation* be Just, (which I will prove, when that Matter comes to be Tried in a regular way) and if according to that Account, my Sentiments shall be found entirely just, I am fairly acquitted of all *Ground of Offence* on that Head, and am confident that even the words of the *Affidavit*, are consistent with it: For those who have made it, have not Sworn, and I am sure cannot, that the words set forth in their *Affidavit*, had not as spoken by me, Relation to the J E W S, and to *Blasphemy* as punishable by the Civil Magistrate, but to *Blasphemy* in the more general Sense of the word.

Upon these two first Observations of the Committee, it will be sufficient to remark, that these or nothing relating to the *Truth of the Facts*, in the *Affidavit*, and my Account of the *Conversation*, can be Cognizable here. The Witnesses are not all present, who were immediately concern'd in that Conversation. I have something to say against some who have sworn already, for which I also want my Evidence here. Unless therefore the Synod would do the most palpable Injustice to me, they can't concern themselves with the merits of this Cause. Try'd, I am not only content; but desirous it shou'd be, and will do all in my Power, to have it fully canvass'd before the Civil Magistrate, as well as the *Judicatories of this Church*, and by that means the World will see, what this GREAT MATTER can truly be bro't to. If I am fairly convicted in both, I neither deserve Pity nor Regard: But if the Law acquit me, and a Vote run against me,

in another Place, I shall still hope to be able to stand my Ground, and make my Innocence appear by the Dint of Argument, at the Bar of Reason. This is and shall be, my *Dernier Resort*. Nor will I in so plain a Case, be afraid of all the Learning and Dexterity of the *Reverend Committee*, who have begun this Charge, in the Observations I am now considering.

I now proceed to the *III^d* in order, and which I must say, that however the Committee and Synod may alledge, they have my own Confession to bring it immediately before them, is so warpt and interwoven with the *Merits of the Cause*, that it cannot be determin'd without indeed issuing the whole. This were contrary to all Rules of Discipline, to bring any thing of this Moment *prima Instantia*, and when it is not fully prepar'd, before the *highest Judicatory of this Church*; and is such an Instance, as never can be parallel'd among us. For now, if it shall be determin'd, that what they call my *repeated Assertion*, is inconsistent with (what they affect to mention (with a particular Emphasis) even Mr Nevin's *Evasion*, and how justly and kindly they term it so, may be seen by what I said in the former Remark, and I must repeat it to them again, that for ought they know, is a *certain Matter of Fact*, and as far from bordering on a Lye, as any *Fact* they have advanc'd against me, in their *whole Observations*.) I say, if it should be determin'd, that my Words may be stretcht to such an Interpretation, that I declar'd the JEWS were not guilty of *Blaspheming Christ*, in any Sense of the Word, when they said *Christ is not GOD*, then indeed, there will be no need of further Evidence, in the Cause. I

shall

shall thus be condemn'd, of the worst Crime supposable in this Case, out of my own Mouth, against my *declared Sentiments*, against my *express Sense* of it, entred into the Minute, in these words, "that as *Blasphemy* in general imports, the hurting "and *blasting the Reputation* of another, no doubt in "this Sense, the *JEW*s may be said to blaspheme "Christ in denying him to be God". Is it not a Priviledge that every man is allow'd to claim, to explain his own Words, and to declare his own Sense and Design in them? Is it not hard, to force them into a quite *contradictory Sense*, from what is own'd and avow'd? But any kind of Treatment is good enough for such an Offender as me! What then if the Expression was somewhat unguarded, must no favourable Construction be allow'd? Must the worst Sense imaginable, be pickt out of it, and fastned by a *doughty Consequence* upon a Man, as his real Design and Meaning? Here is *Charity* indeed, which scarce can be said to come up to that new Kind and Sort of it, which some call *Negative*! But what Justice is in it will farther be evident, from the following Remarks.

First, As to my Distinction which they represent in this Manner, "that he makes a Distinction of Blasphemy into that which is condemned in Scripture, and that which comes within the Sphere of Human Laws". I would beg Leave, as the Committee has set me an Example, to declare my own Sense of it. I consider *Blasphemy* in general, as to the Original Sense and Meaning of the Word, and so it imports hurting or blasting the Reputation of Persons or Things, in which Sense we find it us'd, Matt. 27. 39. And is translated justly in our Version by *reviling*.

In which Sense *Stephen* is charg'd, as not ceasing to speak blasphemous Words against the Temple. But then *Blasphemy* may be consider'd, as a particular Crime against the acknowledg'd Governour and Judge of the World. Now, this sapping the Foundations of all Society, the Magistrate by the Eternal Law of Order, is oblig'd to suppress and punish it, according to the establish'd Rules of Government, made against that Crime. But still the Difficulty is to fix, what amounts to that sort and degree of *Blasphemy*, which the Magistrate is to punish, for that wise Reason of State. And here I do not stop to declare, that they seem to me under a great Mistake in this Matter, who think it sufficient, to the End that a *Blasphemer* be punishable, that what he says be *Blasphemy*, according to the Definition, which one Set of men think fit to give this Word. But it must likewise be such, according to his own Doctrine, and here is the true Ground of justly punishing a Christian, who blasphemes the Holy Name of God. And no Doubt all such, who own Christ to be as really and truly God, as the other Persons of the BLESSED TRINITY, may even be punish'd by the Civil Magistrate, if they revile Christ, or upon any Account deny him to be God. And I am the more confirm'd in this Notion of *Blasphemy*, as it is a Crime, that justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws; since I have good Reason to believe, that this is the strict and proper Idea of *Blasphemy*, as it is set forth as a Crime, punishable by the Law of Moses, Lev. 24. 15, 16. And thou shalt speak unto the Children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his Sin--16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to Death,

Death, and all the Congregation shall certainly stone him, as well the stranger as he that is born in the Land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to Death. Upon which Text, I beg Leave to transcribe the Words of a most Judicious and Learned Commentator, the Great and Eminent Bishop Patrick, who is known to have been as Orthodox, and knowing in the great Doctrine of our Saviour's Deity, as any here can presume to be. He says in these Words, on the 15 v. "*Whosoever curseth his God---Some of the Hebrews understand this of a Gentile, who liv'd among them, and was not yet, made a Proselyte of the Gate, that if he curs'd the God, which was worshipped in his Country, he should die for it. See Selden de Jur. Nat. Gent. & Cap. ult. And Procopius Gazens extends the Words to such Persons, as curst the God they worshipp'd, tho' he were a false God. Which is according to the common Rule of the Talmudists, that where we find the Words Ith, Ith, (Man, Man, which we well translate whosoever) they comprehend Gentiles, as well as Jews. But no doubt this Law particularly concern'd the People of Israel, whom God intended to preserve by this Law from such horrid Impiety*". And accordingly he observes on that Clause in the following Verse, as well the Stranger,---" By Stranger says he, may be meant, a Proselyte like the Egyptian mention'd vers. 10 and 11.

But in the II^d Place, I beg Leave to observe, that there is the strongest Evidence, that what pass'd in my first Conversation on this Head, and is contain'd in my printed Letter, did entirely refer

refer to this Sort and Degree of Blasphemy, which justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws. And to show this, I need only transcribe that Paragraph of the Letter, to which the Reverend Committee refer, p. 8. " 3dly, That the Affidavit " agrees with my Representation in this, that it " was about the Power of the Civil Magistrate, " the Conversation began. And consequently in all " Reason, when there was no Definition of Blas- " phemy given, what I said must be understood of " that Sort and Degree of Blasphemy, which justly " comes within the Sphere of Human Laws ". Now, have they pretended to answer the presumptive Argument, therein offer'd, to establish this Observation? No, they only pronounce, that this seems to them inconsistent with Mr. Nevin's own Evasion, p. 5. where are these Words, " and then " it was urg'd, was it not Blasphemy in them to deny " Christ to be God? To which I answer'd, and " doubt not I repeated it again, that it was no Blas- " phemy in them to deny Christ to be God ". Which they observe is deliver'd in such universal Terms, as does not admit of such a Restriction, as is mention'd by Mr. Nevin above. Now then the Notion of Blasphemy, being so determin'd by the Rise of the Conversation, it being plainly about the Magistrates Power, and it being declar'd in the Letter, in the Words immediately preceeding that repeated Assertion, that it was a Sin and Error, in them the J E W S, to deny Christ to be God, but not such as made them obnoxious to Punishment from the Secular Powers. Which yet the Committee, were not so good, as to take Notice of in the least. And therefore, those charitable Brethren, will have this Evasion, as they constantly call my Explication of the Proposition sworn

sworn against me, *inconsistent* not only with what I asserted p. 8, at a great Distance from this, but with what immediately went before, and which was observ'd in the Letter, as offer'd in the midst of the *Conversation*, as limiting my Sense and Notion of *Blasphemy*. But this is not all, for it must not only *seem inconsistent* with it, but not *admit of the Restriction*, which I had taken Care, to set down just before the Proposition, they pronounce to be as *universal*, as has been describ'd: So that after I had said, it was *a Sin and Error in them to deny Christ to be God*, I must be represented as saying in the next very Sentence, that the *J E W S* do neither *revile Christ* (for that is what they must mean, by what they call *Blasphemy condemn'd in Scripture*) nor are *punishable by Human Laws, when they deny Christ to be God*. But with what Truth and Justice, this is set forth against me, may easily appear, for it is just the same Equitable Treatment, as if when I tell the Synod, by *Blasphemy* I mean only that Crime which is *punishable by Human Laws*, and should in the very words of that repeated Assertion declare, that it is *no Blasphemy in the Jews to deny Christ to be God*; any Member should observe upon my Words, just as the Reverend Committee does here, that this is *inconsistent with Mr. Nevin's Evasion*, and is deliver'd in such *universal Terms*, as does not admit of such a *Restriction*, as Mr. Nevin has expressly made, and therefore he must be understood, as declaring that if it be *no Blasphemy in the Jews*, then consequently it is not so much as *reviling Christ, to deny him to be God*. Would not the Candor of the Synod, soon satisfy such an one, that he is greatly wronging me, and putting a Construction

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on my Words, they neither could bear, nor was at all intended by me ?

But *Lastly*, I would beg Leave to observe; what all this mighty *Ground of Offence* amounts to, viz. that what I said in one part of my Letter seems to these *Reverend Gentlemen*, inconsistent with what I had laid down in another, and that an *Affertion* is deliver'd in such *universal Terms*, as does not admit of the *Restriction*, I plead for, in another part of the Letter, and had even in the fullest Manner, just joyn'd with the said *Affertion*. What if this were really the Case, could any say that such an Oversight were a just Ground of refusing to sit in Synod with me ? Shall an *Inconsistency*, be such a high Crime, as can be atton'd for by no other Means than a *Synodical Suspension* ? Have none of my *Brethren*, no remaining *Infirmity*, no *Weakness of Understanding* ? Are they conscious of no such Defects ? And have they such *tender Consciences*, that they cannot sit in Synod with one, that has made such A SLIP ? And that no more can be made of it, I presume is as clear, as possible it can be, when all who either can or will see, must perceive, that I am as far from saying the J E W S do not revile Christ, when they deny him to be God, as the most zealous of my *Brethren* are or can be. And pray then, am I not in an hopeful Way, when such repeated Assurances will not be admitted as *Satisfaction* ; but it must be put to the VOTE, if there be any *Inconsistency* in what I say, and if a *Consequence* can be drawn, which I disclaim and abhor, from what the *Committee* pretends, is an *universal Proposition*, extending to all that in any Sense, may be term'd *Blasphemy*, after I had done all I could to limit it to one

Sort and Degree of it . And this to be determin'd by an *Assembly*, near one half of whom, by their Education can't be suppos'd to understand the Nature of *Consequences*; and the *Manner of drawing them*, which at the same time, I would fain hope, can scarce be imagin'd any design'd Reflection on them ?

But I must not think to escape, if it can even be prov'd, that my Explication is Matter of Fact, and no *Evasion*, but fairly imply'd in this Proposition, which the *Committee*, will have to be *universal*, in Spight of all my repeated *Restrictions*. For in their 4th *Observation* they say, that the Words even as explain'd by him, seem to sound harsh in pious Ears. Why then the seeming of this to them, and the sounding harsh in pious Ears, must be sufficient Ground of Offence, to my Brethren, to refuse sitting in Synod with me. This sure one may say, must be a slight, and no very substantial Offence, when it is made up only of *seeming* and *sounding*. But what if even this be found Visionary, and the Effect of Imagination only, as far as I am concern'd in it ; but indeed a real Mistake and Offence, in the Reverend Committee themselves ; For pray now, what is my Explication of these Words ? It is own'd to be this, that the *JEW S* are not guilty of that *Sort and Degree of Blasphemy*, which justly comes within the Sphere of Human Laws, that makes them obnoxious to Punishment from the Secular Powers, and that they do not deserve to be knockt o'the Head, when they presume to deny Christ to be God : Or as I exprest it in the Synod, that the *J E W S* are to be tolerated among Christians. Does not what I call a *Demonstration* in the printed Letter, p. 5. prove this a certain Truth ? Are there not many

many other unanswerable Arguments, to support my *Explication* ? What then, must an undoubted Truth, seem to the Committee to sound harsh in pious Ears ? Is not this to suppose, that pious Ears will regard the Sound of Truth as Harsh and Frightfull ? What kind of Pious Ears must these be, that will be Grated with hearing, that the JEWS may be Tolerated among Christians, that they may be converted and Grafted in again to Christ, and that Christian Magistrates are not to treat them as Blasphemers, who ought to be put to Death ; for then this would prevent, what will be more the Riches of the World, and the Riches of the Gentiles, than their fall and diminishing was ? On which side then must that be, which may not only seem to, but must sound harsh in Pious Ears ; Even taken in that special Consideration, which the Committee has seen fit to Mention, as an High Aggravation of my Offence, especially from a Gospel Minister, and let me add or Ministers ? Is it possible that it can seem to sound harsh in Pious Ears, from a Gospel Minister, that the JEWS are not to be swept off the Face of the Earth, by Christian Magistrates as a set of Blasphemers, whenever they presume to deny Christ to be God, but ought rather to be tolerated, nay perhaps Encourag'd to Live among Christians, that they may obtain Mercy to believe ? Is this any way Terrifying, when coming from a Servant of him, who declar'd that he came not to destroy Mens Lives but to Save them, and who Rebuk'd his Disciples for their Intemperate Zeal, when they wou'd have called down Fire from Heaven on the wicked Samaritanes, who surely were in Every Respect Revilers of Christ, that the JEWS

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can now be pretended to be? Whether then the *Reverend Committee* or I, have most forgot the *Spirit and Character of Gospel Ministers*, shall be freely left in Judgement by me.

The next Particular is indeed the most alarming and extraordinary Branch of the whole, and therefore I shall be at the pains to transcribe it intire. It is the 5th Observation made by the *Reverend Committee*, and runs in these words, "*We beg leave to Observe, that tho' page 10, he owns he made a Confession of our Saviour's Deity before the General Synod 1721, yet he says, that for his part he is sorry he ever gave way to it, and shall for the future take care, that no Temptation whatsoever shall make him venture so far again.*"

Now does not this in the strongest Manner impress the Minds of Men, that what I was sorry for, and resolv'd under no Temptation whatsoever to do again, was my Having made a Confession of our Saviour's Deity, as if I had ventur'd too far, in the Professions I made of that blessed Truth, and would not at any time, nor in any Circumstances own and acknowledge it again? Innocence is a noble Support, and the more unjustifiable the attacks that are made upon it, are, it is still the more Comfortable. When no fair Arts will serve to blast or hurt it, it stands firm and unshaken, whenever unjust and dishonourable ones are used. I should be Content to find, that such an Imputation were disown'd by the *Committee*, as design'd against me, and that it was owing to haste, that it Carries such a direct and dreadful charge in it, as if I were repenting of having Confess'd that Important and Glorious Article of the Gospel, from

from a disbelief of it now, or alteration in my Sentiments, from what I did under the greatest Concern of Soul, express in *the Synod 1721*. And as this appears to be the Natural Construction of their Words, if I am able to find out the Meaning of Words, which are generally my own, but most grossly perverted, as the Reverend Committee has tackt them together, so if they don't retract this Part of the Charge, or own that they did not intend such an Horrid Misrepresentation of my Words; all the Keeness, all the pointed Expressions, and every turn I have us'd against them, must appear very Little under such high Provocation.

I must here beg Leave, to stop a little, that the World may see, what it is I say, and how the good Natur'd Committee has dealt by me, in this dreadful Part of my Supposed Guilt, and, Judge it more clearly, than they possibly can do by this strange Observation on my Letter. That these are my Words, I freely own, but whether they are all my Words, or whether they are in this Manner join'd together by me, or whether they are all the Words Necessary to give the Sense of these distinct Paragraphs, out of which they are cull'd, (The first Part of the Observation, from the Beginning of one, and the other Part from the close of the Following Paragraph,) and if this be fair dealing, " I am ready to refer to every Man of what Denomination soever, who may hereafter look into this Prosecution. I am sorry indeed to find any such Occasion of Complaint. But here I will complain, in no other Manner, but by producing others of my own Words, with this Observation, that they are not separated, from these set down by the Reverend Committee,

mittee," not dispers'd in other Sentences, or in such a Manner scatter'd about, that Charity and Candour need to be call'd in to Judge of my Intention; but express words in the same very Paragraphs, which are indeed Upon quite distinct Subjects, and have no such possible dependance, or close Connection with one another, as the Reverend Committee very unfairly insinuates. The whole of them stands thus p. 10.

"To conclude, Sir, I despair of satisfying any concerning my Soundness in that Point of our Saviour's Deity, who are not already Satisfy'd by the Testimony, which was given by the General Synod 1721, in favour of all the Non-subscribers; viz. that they had all declared their belief of that Doctrine in the **STRONGEST TERMS**. And I am convinc'd that all who read this Letter will find that there is no Reason from the Conversation, to which the Affidavit now handed about Relates, to suspect that either I was Insincere in what I then voluntarily Express'd, or that I have since altered my Sentiments on that Head.

"We are indeed charged by the Rev'd Mr. Mastertown with having acted inconsistently with our known Principles, by the concession which we made upon that Occasion. We were then of Opinion that we had a sufficient Salvo for the Principles we had espous'd concerning the Rights of Men and Christians. But I must freely own it, that I account all inquisitory Methods to be so contrary to the essential Rules of natural Equity, to the Discipline which Christ has Instituted in his Church, and even to the known

known Rules of our Association ; that, if what we did in that Juncture, gives any countenance to an unjust and unchristian Method of Issuing Scandal, I for my part am sorry that ever I gave way to it, and shall for the future take care, that no Temptation whatsoever shall make me venture so far again.

Where I beg it may be taken notice of, that I still insist that there is *no reason from the Conversation, to which the Affidavit handed about relates, to suspect that either I was insincere in what I then voluntarily expressed, or that I have since altered my Sentiments on that Head.* Let every honest Breast then conceive all the just resentment which this patch-work Observation of the Reverend Committee must inspire it with, if it be own'd and still pretended that there is any occasion given by me in these Paragraphs, not only to suspect but to charge me with an avowed sorrowing, for having confess'd that most comfortable Doctrine of our Saviour's DEITY, and resolving for the future to take care that no Temptation whatsoever shall make me venture so far again ; let them but speak out this freely and stand by what they have done so much already to work up Men to the belief of : and I shall be in no concern to raise any outcry against it : for all Men of sense will be ready to do it for me.

If I have mistaken the Committee here, for if they meant no more than what is the plain and immediate Scope of that part of the 2d. Paragraph they refer to, Let us see what manner of crime there can be in it, and for what wise Reason it can be observ'd as a Ground of offense

offence taken at me ; The whole view of it is this, The Non-subscribers being Charg'd with having acted Inconsistently with our known Principles by the Condescension we made in the Synod 1721 ; I only put this Supposition, *that if what we did in that Juncture gives any Countenance to an unjust and unchristian Method of Issuing Scandal*, in that case, then I declare indeed, *that for my part I'm sorry I gave way to it, and shall, for the future take care that no Temptation whatsoever shall make me venture so far again.* Now pray what is the **IT** I gave way to, or the **SO FAR** I determin'd never to venture my self again ? Is it not, *giving Countenance to an unjust and Unchristian Method of Issuing Scandal ?* Sure, if the Committee will now plead they meant no more, (and is it not Manifest that these words have not the least reference to the Confession I had made of our Saviour's Deity, farther than my doing so might be found in those or like Circumstances, to give Countenance to an unjust and Unchristian Method of Issuing Scandal ?) Is it not my Turn to Expostulate with them, how came this to be *Matter of Offence ?* Here it's plain I declare and speak only upon *Supposition that if it did so*, why then I own, *I am sorry for giving way to it ;* And thus declaring, upon a bare Supposition, is become Terrible Ground of Offence.

But if it will help out the Committee in this pinch, I shant stop to own I am determin'd never to Yield so far again to any Inquisitory Methods upon any Truth whatsoever. Every one is alike to me in this Case, if I were Squees'd in the same Unmerciful way to Purge my self of any Error, as well as of the denying the supreme Deity of Christ, I wou'd Act the same very part I shall

shall do now. And I wou'd fain know how this can be pretended to be any *Ground of Offence*, did I not do the same very thing at the General Synod at *Derry*, 1722. upon the point of the Fundamentality of the Doctrine? Has not this of refusing to Submit to any *Inquisitory Methods* been known to be my Principle for Several Years past? Did I not avow it before my Brethren upon all Occasions? And don't they know that my standing out is very consistent with the full *Perswasion and belief* of any Truth, the Contrary Error whereof however I may yet Absolutely refuse to *purge my self of*? But if after all this must and shall be *Ground of Offence*, Sufficient, with Others as *Groundless and Imaginary*, to Justify the *first Motion* against me, I shall refer my Case to God, and say with the Apostle, it is a *small thing for me to be Judged of Men*.

And thus at last I come to the Finishing Observation, which is a *Teeming* one indeed; casting forth no less than Six different Accusations all very Odious, but to my Comfort unsupported by any Authority but the bare allegations of the *Reverend Committee*. They have charg'd them upon me, pronounc'd me *Guilty*, and such wise and Good Men must not be suppos'd mistaken or spreading a *Calumny* against a Brother without abundant Reason: But if it be found that they had very little or in very deed none at all, will not this be tho't Acting according to the known Rule of *fortiter calumniare*: Cast a great deal of dirt, and some of it will stick.

What then is the first dreadful Offence taken at me here, even this that thro' the whole of his Letter he speaks with (*what seems to us*) an unbecoming

becoming air? a seeming sound before was a great ground of Offence against me, and now a seeming unbecoming air must be one of the concluding Grounds of offence against me too, what the air of a Letter is and what makes it unbecoming, is too Subtile and fine a thing for my grosser Apprehension. But however quick Sighted the Reverend Committee may be in discovering and perceiving such an Unbecoming air, they must give me leave to Observe that as a Man must be in a very Weak and tender state of Health before he can be hurt by the Air; so that Conscience must be tender to a Degree, that will be so Offended by the unbecoming Air of a Letter, that it wont Suffer one with freedom to sit in Synod with a Brother till there be Satisfaction given for it.

But they may alledge that the Unbecoming Air is made visible in the following Charge, not treating the Important Subject of Conversation with that Seriousness and Gravity that becomes a Gospel Minister, why then I perhaps made a jest of Christ's Divinity, of the Crime of Blasphemy, of the power of the Magistrate, or the Conversion of the JEWS; for sure this is all the important subject of Conversation, which is either refer'd to in the Affidavit or Mention'd in my representation of it. But I challenge Malice itself to point out one single Expression relating to any part of the Conversation, that wants that Gravity and Seriousness which becomes a Gospel Minister. I have indeed in the midst of treating that Important Subject of Conversation, broke a jest or two on the Master of the House; which he is well enough Train'd up to, by some who know what is a becoming Air, and what is Consistent with Good

Good Manners as well as any of the Reverend Committee can Modestly set up for. But is not this *unbecoming a Gospel Minister*, to mingle Jest or Satyr with *Grave and Serious Subjects*? But I think this huge Offence must dwindle and Sneak out of sight, when I put the Reverend Committee in Mind, how a famous Prophet of God treated the Priests of Baal upon a solemn Tryal, whether their gods or his shou'd be God, 1 Kings 18. 24, 27. *And call ye on the Name of your gods, and I will call on the Name of the Lord, and the God that answereth by fire, Let him be God, and all the People answered and said, It is well spoken. And it Came to pass at Noon, that Elijah mock'd 'em, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a Journey, or Peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.*

But I shall have occasion anon, for this very part of Holy Writ, to wipe off another Part of this *Heap of Scandal*, which is thrown upon me.

But here the Charge begins to thicken upon me, the Crimes alledg'd, are of a deeper dye, and would if prov'd in any Measure, in all the Aggravations they are Loaded with, be real Ground of Offence. For their III^d. Accusation is, that contrary to the Rules of the Gospel, I offer *Railing and indecent Expressions*; First to his Majesty's Justice of Peace. It is certain a Railer is one of those Offenders, the Apostle commands (1 Cor. 5. 11.) not so much as to eat with. And it is well my Brethren do not *Scruple this*, as well as *sitting with me in Synod*, after *Railing in such an Unchristian Way*, against one in such High Office and Station! Why now

L hear

hear this wicked Railing, p. 9. " And I am wholly in the dark, but the Worthy Justice may have been in the way of his duty; and so shall spare that Return he richly deserves, if I can be once assured it was none of his proper business, but the Effect of his good will to hurt my Character by that Scurvy Affidavit, which may be found afterwards to touch his Worship more sensibly than it does me.

I have here own'd my Ignorance, whether he was in the Way of his Duty, or no, and observ'd that if it was none of his proper Business, he Richly deserv'd a Return, which I wou'd spare, till I was assur'd of the Truth of that Matter, and said that in the Event it might be found, to touch his Worship more sensibly than it does me. Tho' this last with some, may pass for railing, I am much mistaken, if it ben't found very just and true, when I see it proper to make the Return which I had in my Eye, and the Reverend Committee, must still allow me to spare it. One Thing I am free, now to publish to the World, that the Person concern'd in the Affidavit, against whom I have yet said nothing, has assur'd me, he was bro't before that Justice, by a SUMMONS from the Courts in Dublin: And since I came to this Town, I have receiv'd certain Information from that Place, that no such SUMMONS was or cou'd possibly be got. And pray, when I knew this much before I writ my Letter, Must any thing I have said, pass for Railing, after such Management as this? I don't see an indecent Expression, I can be Suppos'd to have us'd except that of calling the Affidavit a Scurvy one, be judg'd so. And can this with any tolerable Sense

Sense, deserve to be called *railing at the Justice*? For must not every one in that Office, take not only *Scurvy* but *wicked Affidavits*, and must saying so much, be accounted *Railing at any Wor-thy Justice*? Why there shou'd be the least Con-cern, for the Honour of the *Affidavit* by any but such, as are inclin'd to hope, and wou'd fain have it true in its worst Appearance, I am not able to guess. But sure if I had *railed at his Worship*, he can as effectually Chastise me, as they can pretend to do, Methinks they might have left that to himself, if they had not want-ed something to say against me.

And I must say, It is pleasant enough, that they must also take upon them, the Vindicati-on of the *Gentleman of the House*, and make what I say of him, *railing*, by Way of a 4th Accusa-tion against me. If speaking undoubted Truth of one, who had broken thro' the Laws of *Hospitality*, who had done all in his Power, to Ruine me more Ways than one, and who has come to the Spot to confirm by his *discreet and prudent Behaviour*, all that I said and foretold of him, must be *Railing* with this Reverend Com-mittee, I shall come to them to learn not only the Sense of Common Words, but of the plain-est Commands of Christ. Must a Man's Ne-cessary self Defence, be accounted *Railing*? Must not a Man Exculpate himself, at the just Ex-pence of another Man's Character? Is any Thing more common in the Course of our known Dis-cipline? Shall I not be oblig'd to prove this upon Oath, whenever my Tryal comes on? Will it be *railing* then, and why is it more so now?

And so I pass on to the 5th Accusation, under

this Head, and I must say, It is the only Thing in this Part of the *Charge* that gives me any Manner of Concern. One thing I am Conscious to myself of, that it was as far from my Heart, to use the Scriptures, with too much Freedom, as to wound my own Soul. *The Bible the Bible is my Religion, dear to me as my Life* ; And I wou'd rather bear all the *Obloquy* and *Fury* of Men which this present Affair has drawn upon me, than even seem to reflect in the least upon it. It fills my Soul with Horror, to have this Imputation cast upon me, as if I *burlesqu'd the Scripture*. And Cou'd I see that there is any Just Ground, for such an *Offence*, I wou'd count it my Glory, to make any *Satisfaction* that cou'd in Reason be desired of me.

But as I know, it was no Way in my Thot, I despair not to say as much in *Defence* of what I did, as will at least make it appear very much short, of the foul Imputation of such Abominable *Prophannels*. *Burlesquing the Scripture*, does properly import nothing else, but turning it into *Ridicule*, especially when it is us'd in such a wicked Way, as to make it countenance any Thing that is *smutty or obscene*, or to make the *Scripture* appear in itself, *Trifling, silly, and Inconsistent*. But sure not any Thing like such a Reflection, on these blessed Oracles of Truth, can ever be laid to my Charge. All I have done, is plainly no more than this, I have upbraided that *Gentleman*, with affecting to be in an extraordinary Concern, for the Cause of God, as if he were a *righteous Soul*, which did not appear to me, of apiece with the general Course and Tenour of his *Life*. And this

I have done in a Scripture Phrase, and might I not expose him for valuing himself, on such *flaming Zeal*, when he seem'd to me to neglect a just Regard for the great Rules of *Truth and Sobriety*? And is it a *burlesquing the Scripture*, to do this in Scripture Language? Put the case, that a Man were preaching on that Hypocritical pretension of *Jehu*, 2 Kings 10. 16. *Come with me and see my Zeal for the Lord*. And after having represented all the fair Shew, which a wicked Man might put on for the Glory of God, bring him in, as expressing an extraordinary Concern for abounding and prevailing Errors, and then add, *it vexed his righteous Soul*; I don't see, but it is exactly parallel to what I have done, and yet they must be something more than *Uncandid Censurers* of the Man's Performance, who would exclaim against this as *Burlesquing the Scriptures*. And sure it can make no difference in the Case, that the one is done in a Sermon and the other in a Printed Paper. The Instance I already gave of *Elijah*, must vindicate the Practice of mocking Men, when they make Pretensions that are groundless and Empty: And was it *burlesquing* that great Truth of the Being of God, to turn upon the Priests of *Baal*, with so smart and cutting an *Irony*, 1 Kings 18. 27. --- *for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a Journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked*.

From which Example, it is Sufficiently plain, that an *Irony* however pointed and Keen, is no Way unlawful; and that it can't be tho't faulty, to accommodate a *Scripture Expression* to that Purpose. I need plead no other Excuse, than the common Practice, of the greatest and most Serious

rious Divines, who never stop, to make Use of a *Scripture Phrase*, in a Way quite distinct from its original Use.

And Yet after all, when there is such a Handle made of it, I wish Sincerely, I had not us'd it in that Manner: And if that ben't *Satisfaction* for that Ground of *Offence*, I know not what can be. To own it is *burlesquing the scripture*, when I see no Imaginable Ground for such a vile *Accusation*, would be to expiate a *supposed* wickedness, with a *real* one. But if ever just Cause of Complaint was given for using an *Invidious Expression*, here it is. If I had us'd an improper, and ill chosen *Phrase*, to expose what I tho't *ridiculous* in the Man: Had there been any Measure of *Charity*, Nay any shew of *Justice* made use of on this Occasion, wou'd the most *Barbarous* and *undeserved* Term have been chosen. But it's plain what End it answer'd.

And at length, I am come to the 6th and Last *Accusation*, about which I can declare myself to be in no great *pain*, however some may be angry at it.

In *fine*, It is what the Reverend Committee calls, my *Ludicrous Way* of mentioning the *Common Confession* of this Church, calling it by *Way* of *Ridicule*, the *DARLING Confession*. But every one will see, that whatever *Ridicule* is in the Expression, 'tis not design'd against the *Confession* itself, (For that I have always, and hope ever shall esteem as an excellent and most useful *System of Truth*, but never a standard of *Orthodoxy*, or *Rule of Faith*, but to be compar'd with the *sacred Scripture*, and not be believed, but so far as it appears agreeable to, and founded on the

Words

Word of God,) But against what seems to me an Undue Regard for it; as if it were better calculated to keep Error out of the Church, than the Words of the Holy Ghost. Now this will appear to have been my very Scope in that Place. I was complaining that a Scrap of the Conversation, was laid hold upon, and then said, *What a sad Hand might be made of the Bible itself, at this Rate? Heresy and Blasphemy might by such a Proceeding be father'd on that Fountain of Truth,* and because I was well aware, that many might fancy, that under the Latitude of Expression, which the Lord Jesus the great Head of the Church, in his infinite Wisdom SAW fit to use, in his Inspired Volumes, such an abuse Might be offer'd to them, and it seem no Way strange, therefore to carry the Point even Higher, I subjoyn'd that the Confession, which some out of a fond Opinion did imagine, was cast into Phrases, not so Lyable to be perverted, as being of a more determinate meaning than the Scriptures, might also be abus'd in that very Manner. And it was out of a view to this, that appears to me, an excessive and unwarrantable Regard to that Book, however Excellent in its Kind, that I added that provoking Epithete; and to call this a making the Confession too much their DARLING, Every one must excuse in me, till I can see the present Controversy about it in quite another Light. And thus all the Offence here, is that I have hinted at some Men's favourite Sentiments, with what they may think Banter and Ridicule, but was only design'd by me, to carry the Argument higher upon their avowed Principle and Notion.

And now I must come to the sting of the whole

whole in these Remarkable words, *all which being published by himself to the World, if not RESENTED by us, we can't free ourselves from being PARTAKERS with him in his Sin.* Upon which let me Subjoin these few Remarks.

Ist, That since the Committee owns, that *all, (which I presume is contained in the Libel) is Published by myself to the World,* this confirms my former Observation, that *ALL* they have to *Observe* upon me, is *published to the World by myself,* and Consequently is contain'd in my *Printed Letter,* and yet the *Expressions* dropt by me in *Defence* of it before the Synod, are assign'd as one of the Main Springs of *Offence* taken at me; tho' the Committee have not Remark'd upon any such, but (*expressly*) say, that *ALL* they have *Observ'd* against me, is *Published to the World by myself.* And thus I am acquit of one of the Principal *Branches* given in *Charge* to and *Received* by the Committee. If it be alledged, that this only Refers to the last *Observation,* and the *Grounds of Offence* contained in it, then it must be own'd that all my *sin* lies in *them* too, and so is brought into a Narrower *Compass.*

II. I observe, that whatever the *Reverend Committee* mean by their *RESENTING,* which is, as far as I know, an unusual Expression in Cases of this *Nature,* it very well became 'em to have shewn what Rule of the Gospel I have *Transgress'd* that they might *Justly* have proceeded to Censure me, and acquit 'emselves from any *Participation* in my Guilt; and in all the *Articles,* which they have form'd as *Grounds of Offence,* I find abundance of intricate and perplex'd Reasoning, but not one Text of Scrip-

ture; which seems to me somewhat strange from such a Reverend Committee making Report and Complaint to a Reverend Presbyterian Synod; and Especially Representing such heinous Infections *sin*, as to avoid any Communication in it, such a Publick Prosecution was necessary, for the Ease of their Consciences, and the Honor of their Profession. I wou'd have Expected, that they shou'd have laid down the SCRIPTURE Grounds of their Offence, and shown by a clear Deduction from GOSPEL Declarations and Principles, the Nature and Heinousness of that *sin*, whereof they were so much afraid of their Partaking, even by their silence; and particularly it was incumbent on them to have demonstrated its malignity and aggravations in their Complaint.

Lastly I Observe, however grievous the *sin* was, there was a way of Satisfying for it propos'd to me, by some of the Synod, and Even of the Committee 'emselves, without any Profession of Repentance either, but by doing something, which I have already shewn, the Nature of the pretended Offence, neither directed me to do, nor them to Require; but such a thing as from my Printed Letter, and express public Declarations in their Presence, they cou'd not but know, wou'd have been in ME sinful, because contrary to the LIGHT of my own Conscience; that is, to PURGE myself of suppos'd Offence, by my own Solemn Declaration of my Innocence, when nothing can be prov'd against me. Did the Reverend Committee think, there was great *sin* in my Printed Letter, and Expressions before the Synod, which they dreaded that 'emselves and this Church wou'd Partake

take in, unless there was a Public *Resentment* of it; and yet all this *sin* and the *Scandal* that had been given, wou'd have *Evanish'd*, if I had but complied with the *Demand*, for which they can produce, no *Scripture Warrant*. And now whether the Zeal of this *Venerable Synod* and particularly of the *Reverend Committee*, has exerted itself *uniformly*, to the degree of Warmth proportionable to the Occasion, in all other *Cases* which lay before 'em, at this and other of their *Meetings*, I leave it to themselves and the World to Judge. Upon a serious Review if they have shewn an Equal *Resentment* against all other *Offences* that have appear'd before 'em, or an Equal *Keeness* to discover faults of People, Ministers and Presbyteries, let 'em Enjoy Satisfaction in their *Impartiality*, and let it be remember'd to their *Honor*. Nay upon a Serious Enquiry, let their own *Consciences* tell 'em, whether all the faults they have been able to discover in me, were not *such*, as might have Claim'd some *Indulgence* from Men, who are Conscious to themselves of their own *Infirmity*; and if their Eye has been *Single* enough, free from every thing, which might Occasion their *seeing suppos'd Offences* of a Brother in a *false light*.

To conclude, as the *Reverend Synod* must be Sensible of the great *Disadvantages*, under which I have been Oblig'd to draw up this *hasty Defence*, I hope they will put a *Candid* and *Charitable Construction* on *Incautious Expressions*, if any such there be; whereby, I assure them, I had not the least Intention to irritate or offend, but to make my *Innocence* Appear in the stronger Light.

IT must be acknowledg'd, the Synod appear'd in very good Temper after Reading this Answer, which gave me some faint hopes, that they might yet hearken to moderate Counsels. But all these vanish'd when I was given to understand, that it wou'd not be an Easy Matter to Settle what Points were to be Refer'd to the Presbytery of Down, and found the Party making use of their Prevailing Interest to bring me under a new hardship, when notwithstanding my Representing how much my Spirits were Exhausted with so much Labour, and want of Sleep, they pass'd an order to attend their Clerks that Afternoon, as appears by their Minute on this Head; which shall be Inserted, after I have Mention'd this one thing more, which is fit to be taken notice of before I come to the History of the Public Tryal; and, that is, the order made for the regular Management of it, which I shall give in the Words of the Minute.

Die Saturn: 20 Jun: post Preecs Sederunt.

"The Synod Enttring upon the Consideration of the complaint tabled against M. N-- the Charge drawn up against him by the Committee appointed for that purpose, was read, and Mr. N-- Read his answer to it. And then the Synod agree'd that the Charge drawn up against M. N-- shall be Read Paragraph by Paragraph, and Mr. N--s answer Paragraph by Paragraph alternately. And this Synod allows the Committee who drew up the Charge to be MANAGERS in this Cause, which shall not preclude 'em from Judging and Voting in it. And Mr. James Bruce and Mr. Shannon, are allow'd to assist Mr. N-- in his Defence, which shall not preclude

“ ’em from judging in this Cause: And Mr. Samuel
 “ Henry and Mr. Vance are to get a Copy of Mr.
 “ N--’s Answer against next Sederunt and Mr.
 “ N. is to meet ’em at 3 in the Afternoon.

There was also a general allowance given on both sides, that if any other Members beside the *Managers*, had a Mind to speak in Support of the *Libel*, or any others besides those Named to be my *Assistants* had any thing to offer in my Vindication, they shou’d not be suppos’d precluded by any thing in the minute from speaking to any Point in Debate. And accordingly this Liberty was taken in the Course of the Tryal by severals both for and against me. And it was happy for me that this was agree’d upon, it luckily coming from some who cou’d not be suspected to favor me in the least. For the Cry rais’d against me prevail’d to such a Degree, and the heavy *Charge* drawn up by the *Committee* made such an Impression on the Minds of the weak and credulous, that it was Enough to draw Down almost a General Odium on any who open’d their Mouths in my Defence. And so the Members I had Named, thought ’emself oblig’d in Prudence afterwards, publickly to decline their appearing in the Character of *Assistants* to me. And thus all my Support was Devolv’d on such, as wou’d Act the Generous part of standing in Defence of one ready to be run down by a Number of Keen *Opposers*. But yet in Gratitude to such of my Brethren as shew’d by their Conduct, that the Censures of prejudic’d Men cou’d not Scare ’em from a Steady and Impartial pursuit of Justice, I must Challenge my greatest Adversaries to give one Single Instance, where they open’d

open'd their Mouth in my favor, when the Regards, they owed to Truth, to Innocence and the plainest Rules of Equity and our own Discipline did not Require it at their Hands. If my Case had been such as to need being Screen'd from Justice, they were not the Men to Concur in so foul a thing. No party-Interest wou'd have prevail'd with them, a fair and Equitable Tryal was all they desired and pleaded for.

An Entire transcript of my *Answer* being Deliver'd to the Synod; On Tuesday afternoon My *tryal* was Enter'd upon; and according to the order formerly Mention'd, the first *Article* of the *Charge* against me was read, and then that part of my *Answer* which refer'd particularly to it. And after some florid Speeches made by some of the *Managers* to guard the Audience against that *Unreasonable pity* which many were too ready to Indulge towards a Person in Distress and under Prosecution, and to assure every one present that all their warmth in this cause did not flow from the *impure springs of Malice or party Spirit*; but did only proceed from a *sincere Zeal* for the Honor of the Lord Redeemer; all that had the face of Reasoning turn'd on these following points.

Ist, That whereas in one of my *preliminary Observations*, I had refer'd to the Conduct of the Church of Scotland in the case of a *Learned Professor*, as being directly opposite to the Manner of proceeding against me, it was pleaded that the Circumstances of that *Prosecution* were very Different from this. For here was a *Letter published and own'd by me*, which amounted to a *full and unexceptionable Proof*, which cou'd
not

not be pretended in that Instance ; and that if he was not brought under *Censure* from the time the first complaint was made against him, it was because he acted another part than I was willing to do, he not only disown'd the *Errors* he was charged with, but confess'd the *opposite Truths*, which are in the *Confession of Faith*, which was all the Synod desired of me. Now this being a Case a great deal of stress is laid upon, and such as will Evidently display the *Injustice and Irregularity* of the proceedings against me, I shall give a short detail of the steps, that were taken in it, as they appear in the public Records of that Tryal.

March the 17th 1712. Mr. *John Simson*, the Learned Professor of Divinity in the University of *Glasgow* was accused of Error, by the Rev'd Mr. *James Webster* before the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, to which the said Professor was not Subject, and afterwards before the Provincial Synod of *Lothian and Tweeddale*, which was also Renew'd before the General Assembly in 1714. where the sentence of the Synod of *Lothian*, appointing said Mr. *James Webster*, or any who will Join with him in Charging Mr. *John Simson*, with Error to table their Complaint before the Presbytery where he lives was Confirmed. Accordingly the 27 of September following, a Libel was Subscrib'd against him by Mr. *Webster*, and prosecuted before the Presbytery of *Glasgow*, from which Mr. *Webster* appeal'd to the General Assembly 1715. by whom a Committee was appointed with Power to take the foresaid Process into their Consideration, to prepare a full and distinct state thereof, to be Reported to the

the next General Assembly together with the Committee's overture thereupon, in order to a final Decision by the Assembly; and among other Instructions to this Committee, it appears, they were to allow that Learned Professor to qualify his Propositions, and in the first place to adduce Witnesses for *his Exculpation*; Provided always that whatever orthodox sense it be found he gave of Propositions advanced by him, Mr. *Webster* be also allow'd to prove that he uttered these Propositions in an Heterodox Sense, if he thought fit to do so, and to be careful to distinguish betwixt these things taught by him *in the School*, and these Emitted by him in *private Conversation*. This Committee not finishing the Process, the Assembly 1716. after Enjoining the *Professor* to forbear Teaching, or any way venting the Propositions charged by Mr. *Webster* against him as Error, until they were Cognosc'd and determin'd by the Judicatories of the Church, the Commission and Instructions were Renew'd to such of the said Committee as were then alive to proceed in examining the Points remitted to them by the Last Assembly, and to Consider what Propositions were then laid before the Assembly by Mr. *Webster*, and the *Professor's* Answers thereto. Mr. *Simson* Protested that all these Errors Contain'd in Mr. *Webster's* Libel that are Contrare to the Scriptures, and the Confession of Faith or Catechisms, he had never Taught them as his opinion, or as Truth; but has on the contrary refuted them, and is Resolved thro' the Grace of GOD still to forbear the Teaching such Errors, and therefore he did Look upon the said Injunction only to Import, that he is

not

not to Teach such Errors as several Members of that Church had, by wrong Reports that had gone thro' the Land, Imagined had been taught by him ; for which the former part of this his Declaration, he hoped, wou'd give sufficient Satisfaction, until the Process was duly tried : For he was perswaded the Venerable Assembly wou'd not do any thing so contrare to the *Common Rules of Equity and Justice*, as to lay on him an Injunction, which did Insinuate, that he had taught any Error, before they had heard the Cause, and *found him Guilty* ; and he further Protested, that Mr, *Webster* had Succumb'd in the Probation of his Printed Libel, viz. his Postscript to the printed Copy of the said Mr. *Simson's Letters* to Mr. *Rowan*. And 'tis to be further Observ'd, that in the Mean while until the Matter was fully tried and Examin'd by that Church ; and the said Mr. *John Simson* **CONVICTED**, the Assembly discharged all the Ministers of that Church, either in Preaching or Printing, to charge the said Mr. *Simson*, as *guilty of Error*.

I shall not tire the Reader with making all the Reflections, which might be Pertinent to my present Case, hoping that he will keep these proceedings of the *Church of Scotland* in his Eye, and Compare 'em in his own Mind with the Proceedings against me. But I must beg Leave to Mention these few, That the General Assembly wou'd not break thro' the *Establish'd order of Discipline*, and take into their Consideration *Prima Instantia* an affair, which as I observed in my Answer to the Libel, was of the last Consequence to the Church, but left it to be prosecuted in the leisurely Regular way,

way, and had it before 'em no less than *four successive* Assemblies before it was Issued, that nothing like *Suspension* from any part of his Office was offer'd by the Assembly, till he shou'd be *Convicted* or *Contraveen* the Injunctions given by the Assembly; that what he said in his *Declaration* above Recited was not *Required* by any Act of the Assembly, nor does it appear that if he had done no such thing, he had been in the least danger of a *Censure*, but seems to be rather in pursuance to the Measures he laid down to himself in his Speech before the Presbytery of *Glasgow*, of *not confining himself to say only what he was in Law strictly oblig'd unto*.

That I claim'd no other Priviledge, than was allow'd Mr. *Simson*, in *Qualifying* and declaring in what sense I utter'd the Proposition, which was the occasion and *Ground* of *most* of the *Offences taken at me*, and I, as well as he, Renounced, in my printed Letter, and more fully in my Answer to the Libel, the Error Charged on me, as contain'd in that Proposition, and was very willing to leave it on this Issue, that my Prosecutors shou'd be allow'd to prove that I uttered that Proposition in a *Heterodox* sense, if they had any Evidence, by writ, Witnesses, or both, as was expressly prescrib'd in the *Professor's Case*. And that at least in the Assembly 1716. his Case did not differ from mine in the Particular mention'd, by the *Managers*; for then 'tis plain they had his *Printed Letters to Mr. Rowan before them*, as well as our Synod had mine to Mr. *Smith*, and yet they did not Immediately thereupon take these for *unexceptionable Evidence* against him, but gave him full time to make his Defence and to have his

whole affair Deliberately and Calmly enquir'd into. But above all the Sequel of this Narrative will show, if the Synod had allow'd the benefit of that Instruction given to the Committee by the Assembly with respect to *Exculpation*, I must have Escap'd their *Resentment*, if the *danger of Error* had been as near their Heart, as the *Love of Power* over the Consciences of their Brethren.

If I have mistaken any Circumstance in this famous Tryal, it is only for want of fuller Information, than I cou'd possibly get out of the *Printed Acts of the Assembly* and the *Printed Process*, out of which I have generally taken the very Words I have us'd in the short account given of it. And I hope that Learned *Professor* will forgive my referring to his Case in this Manner, when he sees how much I have been his fellow Sufferer by a *pretended Zeal for Truth*, and for not *thinking in every Point* Just, as some of my Bretheren do.

II. The old Motion was renew'd of inflicting a Censure immediately before the Tryal; and Precedents were alledg'd, and this particular Case put, If an *Affidavit* was made by a single Person, that a Minister was guilty of Adultery, it wou'd certainly be thought Expedient to suspend him, till the Scandal cou'd be Issued in a regular Way, but here there were three Persons who had made *Affidavit* of these Words, and much more then ought a Censure to be inflicted on such strong Presumption! What Regard is to be had to Precedents in this Matter, is a Point fully consider'd afterwards, and so I shall only mention what was said in Answer to that particular Case. It was observed there was a great Disparity in it, from

from the Case now in Hand. Because all mankind have a determinate Idea of *Adultery*, or any immoral Practise, while yet it was quite otherwise in that of *Blasphemy*, which admits of different Senses, as had plainly appear'd in this very Tryal : And therefore the Number of Witnesses amounted to nothing, as this Case was circumstanc'd, seeing there was one Sense in which I own'd the Words, and another in which I denied 'em. And unless they had sworn that I us'd 'em in the *criminal offensive Sense*, the cases cou'd not be shewn to be parallel, and Consequently if it were just and reasonable in the Case propos'd to inflict a Censure, it wou'd not follow that I ought to be censur'd also.

III. There was a very odd Argument advanc'd to shew that there was Ground to suspect me of being in *Dr. Clark's Scheme*. That since I had only declared my Sense of the Words in the *Affidavit* to be this, that the *Jews in denying Christ to be God, were in a Sin and Error*, but not guilty of that *Blasphemy which makes 'em obnoxious to the secular Powers* ; it was plain that one who Imbrac'd the Principles of that *Learned Author* might say as much, and only mean it of Christ's being an *Inferior God*. When I deliver'd my sense of the Words in the *Affidavit*, I little dream'd that any more wou'd have been Expected, than to shew they were not spoken by me with any view to *deny the DEITY of my Blessed Lord*, and did not in the least doubt but so much wou'd have been *Satisfying* to all. But when once I perceiv'd the Synod directly set up for a *Right* to oblige their Members, to *purge 'emselves* of any Error they were Suspected of ; and for that End to express their Sense of *Di-*

vine Truths in what *Human Words* they pleas'd ; I cou'd not comply with such a Demand, when this *Claim* appear'd upon very full and sufficient Evidence to be without all Manner of Warrant either from the *Scripture*, or dictates of *Reason*. And therefore I was under a necessity to avoid giving any Countenance to such a *Claim*, and made answer to this Effect, that there was nothing in the Argument to shew there was any ground to suspect me, unless a bare *Possibility* cou'd be made to pass for a *Matter of Fact*, *Jealousy* be put in the Room of Evidence, and fancy instead of *Reason*.

All the Rest of the time that was spent on this *Article*, was taken up either in speaking to some of the following Articles, or quibbling about the Words in the *Affidavit*, as being *dishonourable* to our *Blessed Saviour*, without any Regard to the Sense I put upon 'em in my *Letter*, had many a time repeated in their hearing, and had undertaken to make appear in due time, was the Sense I must have had of 'em in the *Conversation*. And when the Party, who were so Eager to make something out of such an *Ambiguous* and far stretch'd *Accusation*, had wearied out 'emselves and all that were present with saying the same things over and over, and found they were able to make nothing of it ; Instead of agreeing to put the plain and natural Question, whether that *Article* was *Cognizable* by the *Synod* or not ? Under pretence of this first being closely Connected with the 2d. they peremptorily Refus'd to consider that Point, till they had gone thro' the following *Observation*. The Arguments upon that Head do so little Affect the Merits of my Cause, that I shan't trouble the

the Reader with them, but shut up this *Article*, with the Minute that was form'd upon it in these Words.

*Die Mart : Jun. 23. Hor : 3tia a Merid : post
Preces Sederunt.*

" The Synod Enttring upon the Consideration
" of the Complaint Tabled against Mr. N. the
" first *Article* of the Charge drawn up against
" him as above was Read, and then Mr. N.
" Read some preliminary Observations, which
" he thought Necessary to Illustrate his De-
" fence, and then Read his *Answer* to the first
" *Article of the Charge*, and the Committee who
" were appointed to *Manage* in that Affair,
" made several replies, and after long Reasoning
" it was mov'd by Mr. N. that the Question be,
" whether the first *Article* Relating to the *De-*
" *position be Cognizable by this Synod?* And it be-
" ing alledged that there is a Connexion be-
" tween the first and the second *Articles*, and
" that the latter is adduced as a Proof of the for-
" mer, and that therefore 'tis necessary joint-
" ly to consider and Vote these two branches
" of the *Charge*, Mr. N. upon this dropt his
" Motion and Consented to proceed to the
" second *Article* ". It shou'd have been added
" more Expressly , that there was a promise to
" at the above Question Concerning both these
" *Articles* together, and the sequel shou'd the ne-
" cessity of doing so.



Proceedings on the second Article.

THE second *Article* therefore being Read and my *Answer* to it. There was a mighty Bustle made at first to Justify the Committee's use of the Word *Evasion*, which they had us'd in this Manner in several parts of the *Libel*, that my pretending the words in the *Affidavit* were only spoken by me, in the first *Conversation*, of the JEWS, and that sort and degree of *Blasphemy*, that comes within the Cognizance of *Human Laws*, was an *Evasion*; which I complain'd in my *Answer* was Charging me with a formal *Deliberate Lye*. And two very wise Reasons were advanc'd to bear 'em out for applying it even in this Sense. The one was that page 10 of the Letter, I had own'd that the Non-subscribers made use of a *salvo* for their *Principle* in the Synod 1721: which was just the same with that of an *Evasion*, and so had represented my Brethren and myself to be a set of Men not to be depended on, and therefore the Committee might well Charge me with having done on this Occasion, what I avow'd to be done by all of the same Opinion with me in a very public Instance. But this discovering such disingenuous Treatment of Men's Characters upon this idle dream and fancy, and depending upon such profound Ignorance of plain *English*; it deserves rather to be Pitied than any serious Answer given to it. And therefore it is needless to repeat what was offer'd to Expose such a trifling Malicious turn, because every one

will be sensible of it at the first view. For 'tis plain by a Salvo, there cou'd be only meant, that they Acted in a consistency with their own Principle, and yet the other Reason was more weak and Ridiculous, while it was pretended, that because they cou'd find nothing in my *Defence*, to relieve 'em from their *Suspicion*, they must think this was an *Evasive* way to *Defend* myself. And thus I must be *Charged* with making use of an *Evasion* in my *Printed Letter*, because in my *Defence* which was drawn up a considerable time after it, I had not Answer'd in such a Manner as to cure their *Jealousies*.

It was indeed pleaded after a while, that the *Committee* meant no more than was very usual to pronounce of an Answer to a Difficulty, which did not seem to be direct to the purpose. But to this it was Replied, that however in such a Case it might be *inoffensive* and bear an innocent meaning, yet when applied to a *Matter of Fact*, as the *Committee* had done in the Instance before us, it cou'd admit of no other Construction, than I had put upon it. But upon their Declaring it was far from their Design to Insinuate any such thing, as if I had asserted a Matter that was not true, I was very well content to drop it; because this seem'd a plain acknowledgement, that they had applied that invidious Term very unjustly on this Occasion; all that was offer'd directly upon the Subject of this *Article*, was just to repeat in different ways their own *Observation* over again, there appear'd no more Argument in all they advanc'd, but still urging the same thing, that if it be true, that I only said it was no *Blasphemy* in the *Jews* to say *Christ is not God*, then
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the Proposition Sworn by *these Persons* cannot be true. But tho' my written *Defence* contain'd a very Sufficient Answer to this pretence, there was no Driving 'em out of it, but there must be an utter *Inconsistency* between the *Affidavit* and my *Explication*; and either one or other of 'em must be false, let never so many Arguments and Examples be set before 'em, to make it Evident that they might be easily Reconcil'd and both be true: And to let every one see, how much the Party was proof against all Reason, it mayn't be Improper to insert very shortly the strength of the Reply that was many a time offer'd to this Difficulty. That the *Affidavit* was an Imperfect account of the *Conversation*. It mentions something as *Fact*, but omits something that is as true. Now make the Supposition, that I had spoke the words in the *Affidavit*, and with the same breath subjoyn'd the *Limitation* I now insisted on; yet when Persons only take a *voluntary Oath*, in which they are not sworn to the *whole Truth*, and in their *Affidavit* mention a Sentence, that was really spoken without any Regard to what was connected with it, what they swear is *Certainly true*; but it is as true that there was something more added to *Limit* and *Explain* the Proposition, and yet there cou'd not be pleaded any *inconsistency*, whatever *unfairness* there might be in forming and making such an *Affidavit*; and it was told 'em this was Exactly my Case, and that when the *Conversation* came to be fully Enquir'd into, it wou'd appear that the JEWS were Mention'd, and no other *Blasphemy* spoken of, but what was *punishable by the Magistr- rate*.

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To make it appear probable to the Synod, that this wou'd be found the Truth of the Case, the Rev'd Mr. *Samuel Shannon* and the Rev'd Mr. *Samuel Haliday* offer'd to bear Testimony that in *January* last, they had some Discourse with me about that *Conversation* which happen'd at Mr. *Hannington's* and that then I gave the same account for Substance, which I had since published to the World. But if any thing cou'd have Engag'd the Party to Entertain any favorable thoughts, that my *Explanation* was no *Evasion*; but the *very Truth*, the Testimony of a Gentleman of good Credit and a Member of the Synod, Mr. *John Johnstone* of *Drumbo*, one wou'd have thought wou'd have effectually done so. For he declared, that while I was Reading my *Answer* before the Synod on Saturday, he was standing beside one of the Persons who made *Affidavit*, viz. *Solomon Mcc.Bride*, who said in his hearing, there was nothing in that Instance of the *JEW*S: For tho' I Mention'd 'em, it was some time before I spoke the words in the *Affidavit*. But even this must pass for nothing: And no intreaty cou'd prevail with the Synod to Enter this into their Minutes. It gave too great Countenance to a very Material part of my *Defence*, to be allow'd a Room in Records that were Design'd, as the Event shows, to perpetuate the Scandal, and therefore must contain as little as possible in my Vindication.

When the Reasoning upon this Article seem'd to be over, I flatter'd myself with hopes of having the promise already Mention'd fulfill'd without the least Opposition, and therefore

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fore moved that the Question might be put, If these two *Articles* were Cognizable by the Synod, or ought to be refer'd to the Presbytery of Down? But to the Surprise of every disinterested Man, the very Persons, who had formally promis'd, that this Vote shou'd be put upon these two *Articles* together, did violently oppose that Question, and urg'd, that all the six *Articles* shou'd be consider'd in the Lump, and when they had a View of the whole, they wou'd vote if there was any thing in them all Complexly taken, that might make me *Censurable* by the Synod, and then they wou'd appoint the Presbytery of Down to proceed to the further Tryal of these *Articles* that lay properly before them. But when their own Promise, made but a few Hours before, and the Unreasonableness of such a Conduct was again and again laid before them, they were with much ado brought to agree, that they should consider these *Articles* by themselves, and come to some Resolution upon 'em.

And when it was urged, in order to convince 'em, that the Question moved by me was the most proper and natural to be put first; that the Plea I had insisted on in my Answer was against these *Articles* being cognizable by the Synod, by which no more was meant, than it did not come Regularly before 'em, and that the Cause was not ripe for a Tryal, when I wanted my Witnesses, and had it not in my Power to bring 'em in the present Juncture. This compar'd with a Paragraph in my Answer, was alledged to contain a Declining the Judgment of the Synod. The Paragraph refer'd to is in these Words, *But if the Law acquit me, and a Vote run against me in another Place, I shall*

Still hope to be able to stand my Ground, and make my Innocence appear by the Dint of Argument, at the Bar of Reason. This is and shall be my *DERNIER RESORT*. Upon which it was observed, that it was very odd, that a man's saying, *Reason shall be his Dernier Resort* shou'd be reckon'd a giving in a *Declinature*, and that it was no more than every Member might say without any *Affront* to the Synod, while they were not suppos'd to be *Infalible*; when it amounted to no more than this, that I was so Conscious of my own *Innocence*, that I hoped to justify myself before the World, tho' the Synod shou'd condemn me. But as plain as this is, it was every now and then represented in *that* Manner, by which I cou'd understand nothing else, but that they wou'd either gladly have me *declin'd* their Judgment, or brought me under some Obligation, namely to *acquiesce in their Sentence* whatever it shou'd be.

There was after this a very *angry* Debate on the part of some Members about the State of the Vote, for when the Roll was begun to be call'd upon the Question moved by me, they cou'd not think of letting this Part of the *Charge* go out of their Hands, without giving some Mark of their *Indignation* against me. And therefore the Vote must be stopt, and for some time, no Question wou'd please 'em, but *offensive or not*? And when the Absurdity of pretending to judge a Matter *Offensive*, when it was not by their own Confession, in their Power to judge whether it was *true or not*, was fully and clearly represented to them, it was all to no Purpose. They had such a nice *distinguishing Faculty*, that they cou'd abstract the *Offence* from the *Truth* of

the Fact, and easily judge of the first without any Regard to the last : And thus a Man may be found guilty of an *Offence*, and *the Truth* of it afterwards enquir'd into, which might be thought a Misrepresentation of the Synod, if their own Minute did not fully express it, which is as follows.

“ Then the 2d *Article* of the *Charge* against
 “ Mr. N. was read, and Mr. N. read his *An-*
 “ *swer* to it, and the *Members* reason'd a con-
 “ siderable time upon this *Article*, and after both
 “ Mr. N. and the *Managers* were fully heard,
 “ Mr. N. own'd that the said *Articles* are a
 “ sufficient Ground of Process against him. It
 “ was mov'd, that we refer the farther Inquiry
 “ into the Truth of the first two *Articles*, and
 “ the Tryal of them, and the *Affidavit*, to the
 “ Presbytery of *Down*, with such Correspondents,
 “ as this Synod shall appoint. Then it was
 “ mov'd, that the Question be put, shall we
 “ approve the above Motion or not ? But at
 “ the same time, the Synod is not to be un-
 “ derstood by putting the above Question, to
 “ preclude 'emselvcs from *enquiring* into the
 “ following *Articles*, and if there be any *Mat-*
 “ *ter of Offence* in these two first *Articles*, for
 “ which this Synod shall think Mr. N. *Con-*
 “ *fessable* at this Time, this Synod is not to be
 “ understood by the above *Resolution*, to pre-
 “ clude 'emselvcs from proceeding thereupon.
 “ Then the Question was put, Refer the first two
 “ *Articles* and *Affidavit* to the Presbytery of
 “ *Down* as above limited or not ? And it carried,
 “ Refer. Then it was mov'd that the *Questi-*
 “ on be put, Approve the above *Explication* of
 “ the

" the Sense of the Synod of the above *Resolution* or not ? It carried Approve.

Proceedings on the third Article.

THE *Managers* and all *their Friends* acted the same part on the third *Article*, which they had done on the two Preceeding. No Argument cou'd prevail with them to begin with the proper Question, whether this *Article* was at present *Cognizable by the Synod or not* ? But without any Regard to the Reason and plain Justice of this Motion, they at once launch'd out into the Merits of the Cause. And when they had wander'd from one Point to another, like Men at Sea without a Compass, and spent all the Provision of *Argument* they had in Store, they were glad at last to take Shelter in the very *Question* they wou'd not hear of at first. But as in the Tryal I must follow 'em, where-ever they drag'd me, let it never be so far out of the way of a *Regular Procedure* ; so in forming this *Narrative* I am obliged to set down whatever pass'd under *each Article*, however foreign or wide from the Purpose it may appear to the Intelligent Reader ; only with this Exception, that it being the constant Practice of the *Managers* and such as joyn'd with them in supporting the *Libel*, to skip from the *Article* that was under Consideration to the following one, so that when the first was Read, they generally speech'd upon the second, and when the second was under Debate, they argued
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generally upon the third, and when that came to be consider'd they fled to the fourth, and were still jumbling 'em thro' one another, I shall reduce to the proper *Articles*, whatever was spoken upon 'em, at whatever time it was offer'd when the Synod interpos'd, and deciar'd what was advanc'd did not belong to the *Article* before 'em.

The Particular which was oftenest advanc'd upon this *Article*, and which therefore I shall set down in the first place was this, that the Proposition as set down in the *Letter* was an *universal Negative*, and so by the establish'd Rules of Language and Philosophy, must be understood in the most *extensive* and *unlimited* Sense, and cannot admit of any Manner of *Restriction*, and that therefore the only genuine and fair Construction of it cou'd be, that it was no *Sort* nor *Degree* of *Blasphemy* in the *Jews to deny Christ to be God*. But to this it was replied, that the general Equity of Mankind agrees in this, that every one shall be allow'd to explain and give the Sense of his own Words, if that be not plainly *inconsistent* with the obvious Scope and Purport of his other Words, which he has applied to the Subject he was speaking or writing of. But that no such thing cou'd be pretended in my Case ; And that as I had observed in my written *Defence*, the *Rise* and whole *Drift* of the *Conversation*, nay, and the *Affidavit* itself, did entirely confine it to that *Sort* of *Blasphemy* which comes within the Power of the Civil *Magistrate*. And that as the Proposition stood in the *Letter*, there were the plainest Intimations thro' the whole Paragraph, that it was only pronounc'd in that Sense of the *Jews* 'emselves. For the *Demonstration* I had us'd p. 5. of my printed

printed Letter, with Respect to them, did put it beyond all Exception, that I was only speaking of that Sort of *Blasphemy*, for which the *Civil Magistrate* might punish, nay, knock Men o'th' head. And I had in exprefs Words immediately preceeding the *Proposition* itself, own'd it to be a *Sin and Error in the Jews to deny Christ to be God*, which applied to this particular Subject, amounts to all that can be call'd any Sort or Degree of *Blasphemy*, except that which comes within the Sphere of Human Laws; and that this being an Indulgence granted to the worst of men, not to interpret their Words contrary to their declared Sense of 'em, when they were fairly capable of it, and especially if it appears, they were so designed by them, it cou'd not therefore without the most manifest Injustice be denied to me, and by an exprefs Instruction given to the Committee, was allow'd Professor *Simson* in his Case, tho' accused of *Jesuitism and Socinianism*. And it was further observed, that what was advanc'd about *universal Propositions* admitting of no *Restriction* was a very groundless Mistake. For there were many such in the Scriptures 'emselves, which necessarily requir'd *Limitations and Restrictions*, otherwise they cou'd not be true. As particularly *Pf. 14. 3. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doth Good, no not one. Pf. 143. 2. And enter not into Judgment with thy Servant: For in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Lu. 1. 6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameless.* were mentioned, and the Necessity shewn of understanding 'em all in a *Restrained Limited Sense*.

But

But because I find a mighty Stress is laid upon this of an *universal negative Proposition's* admitting of no *Restriction*, that it is still insisted on out of doors, and even the Common People have got it into their Mouths, and are strangely amused with it. I wou'd now take Leave to illustrate this more fully, and observe for that End, that all *universal Expressions* even in their utmost *Universality*, *negative* as well as *positive*, are in the Nature of Language, necessarily, and always understood to extend only to all of the *Kind spoken of*, and in the *Sense spoken of*, whatsoever it be, as may be seen in that Remarkable Instance of our Saviour's Words, *Math. 6. 34. Take therefore no Thought for to Morrow.* If now any who deny the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, shou'd except against this, as a very *offensive* and dangerous Advice, might they not in Answer to the plain *Distinction*, which wou'd be made Use of on this Occasion, take up the *Argument and very Words of the Reverend Committee*, and say, 'Tis deliver'd in such *universal Terms*, as do not admit of such a *Restriction as is mention'd*. For if we are to take *no Thought*, then *Consequently not that Kind of Thought*, which is moderate and consistent with a becoming Trust and Affiance in the Providence and Care of Heaven, *more than that Sort of Thought*, which is anxious, immoderate and distrustful of the Mercy and Goodness of our Heavenly Father. By that time the *Committee*, and their able *Assistants* without doors, have furnished out a proper Answer to this Difficulty of their own starting, all their *Observation* against me will drop and dwindle into nothing.

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The next Charge that was brought against me under this *Article*, was; that the Proposition even confin'd to the Jews was directly opposite and Contradictory to the Sacred Scriptures; for therein the Jews were expressly Charg'd with *Blasphemy* for opposing the Doctrine of Christ. And the following Texts were Cited and applied to this purpose with a strange air of *Triumph*, *Acts* 13. 4, 5. 18. 1. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *James* 2. 7. But these were easily shown to be far from Contradicting what I had advanc'd upon the nature of *Blasphemy*. For I had own'd there was a general Sense of the Word, in which the J E W S were Justly Chargeable with it. And that it was only that sort and degree of *Blasphemy*, which is punishable by the Magistrate, that I had denied 'em to be guilty of *in saying Christ is not God*. And that it was plain the Texts were only to be understood in the first and not in the latter Sense at all. And therefore unless they cou'd produce Texts wherein they were declared to be *Obnoxious to Punishment from the Secular Powers*, when they denied *Christ to be God*, or Continued to be J E W S, which is one and the same thing; Let 'em Multiply never so Many, wherein they were Represented as *Blaspheming* for opposing Christ and his Doctrine, they did not in the least Contradict me.

At the same time the account I gave in my written Defence of *Blasphemy* as it is a Crime punishable by the Magistrate, was laid hold upon, and this very Ingenious Syllogism form'd out of it: *Blasphemy against the acknowledg'd Governor and Judge of the World is according to Mr. N. punishable by the Magistrate, but the Blasphemy of*

J E W S in denying Christ to be God is not according to his Principles punishable by the Civil Magistrate. Therefore, &c. At one time it was left to me to draw the Conclusion, and again it was form'd in this Manner, therefore Christ, is not the acknowledg'd Governor and Judge of the World; which is so poor a Piece of Legerdemain, and such Egregious trifling, that if it had not been so often Mention'd, and openly Boasted of as a shrewd Argument dress'd out to great Advantage in this Learned form, I shou'd not think it worth while to have taken any Notice of it. It is a meer Sophism made up of a plain Fallacy. For let it be Observed that the Crime of *Blasphemy*, as it comes under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate, upon my Principles must be Committed against the *acknowledg'd Governor and Judge of the World*, i. e. the one *acknowledg'd* as such by him who *Blasphemes* him. And then the Conclusion can only be, that Christ is not *acknowledg'd* by the J E W S to be the *Governor and Judge of the World*, which is very true, tho' 'tis their fault and may be their Condemnation at last.

Upon this Occasion there was some Extraordinary Reasoning advanc'd, as if these Principles were an Encouragement to Men to turn *Jews*, and were not likely to Promote the Conversion of such as were really so. For if any Blasphem'd Christ they had no more to do to save 'emselfes from any Punishment, but Profess 'emselfes J E W S, and while they were not given to understand that their denying *Christ to be God*, was the most horrid and Dangerous sort of *Blasphemy*, they wou'd be little Affected with any Arguments that cou'd be Offer'd to them.

But

But the weakness of this was sufficiently discover'd, by Observing that Principles did not cease to be true tho' they might be abus'd. And that therefore the Doctrine which I Maintain'd about Blasphemy as a Crime punishable by the Magistrate, must be prov'd to be false by some other Argument, than this of its being liable to be made an ill use of by the Knavery and Craft of Men. For then the most Valuable things must be Condemn'd, and the most unquestion'd Truths Discarded.

FOR the Doctrine of our Blessed Lord himself was a great and signal Blessing to Mankind, and confirm'd by the clearest Evidence, yet nothing more abus'd, nor made the Engine of greater Mischief in the World. And that tho' the Terrors of Men might force the Jews to Hypocritical Profession of Christianity, yet they were not the Motives design'd by our Blessed Lord for their Conversion, and that the Gospel supplies us with other and the only proper Methods for their Conviction. So that no Argument suitable to the Genius of our Holy Religion, wou'd by my Principles be taken out of our Hands, for persuading the JEWS that *Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah.*

But again this description of *Blasphemy* as it is a Crime punishable by the Magistrate, was endeavor'd to be shewn Imperfect and Groundless by this Topic, That there were Grounds to believe that if a Heathen among the JEWS, shou'd have cursed the God of Israel, and us'd Execrations against him in the Streets, he wou'd certainly have been Punished by the Governors of that State, and so this is an Instance of a Person's being punished for Blasphemy,

phemy, while yet he did not Revile the Governor of the World *acknowledg'd by himself*. To which it was Answer'd. I. That Heathens the *Canaanites* 'emfelves, were tolerated by the direction of God himself to live in the midst of his own People the J E W S, if they made an answer of Peace, and open'd unto them, Deut. 20. 11. And accordingly they Retain'd many as Slaves among 'em, and in the Law of God are suppos'd to do so, who were not proselyted to the Jewish Religion, when yet these Heathens must deny him to be the True God, while they prefer'd their wretched Idols and imaginary Deities : Which yet they cou'd not have been, if on this account they were really Blasphemers in the Eye of the Law, for then they must have been put to Death. 2dly Tho' no Civil Magistrate has a right to punish any Person for a Religious Principle, that is not directly pernicious to the State, nor by his Authority ought to Restrain any from Worshipping their own God, and consequently from denying his, *i. e.* the Magistrate's God to be really and truly God : Yet it being his duty to preserve and secure the good of the State ; And it being necessary for the welfare and support of the Society to acknowledge a *Supreme being*, and that he concerns himself with Human Affairs, it is also necessary to guard against such gross and public Indignities to the *Supreme Being acknowledg'd by any Society*, as might be a public disadvantage to the Community, and yet they who were guilty thereof cou'd propose no valuable End to themselves, nor any profit to the Public. Now this is the very Case of *open Execrations and cursing the God of any People*.

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This Method was not very likely to convince even such as Worshipped *false gods*, 'tis not agreeable to the Rules of *Decency*, and is no less than an open and grievous Affront to the Society, and therefore might be justly Restrain'd and punish'd by the Civil Magistrate. We find the Apostles behav'd 'emselves in quite another Manner, when they were Laboring to convert the Gentile World to the *Living and true God*, as particularly the Apostle *Paul*, when he argued with the Philosophers of *Athens*, he did not insult much less use any Execrations or Cursings of their *Fictitious Gods*, but fought only by Reason and Argument to bring 'em over to the knowledge of him, *who as yet was to them the Unknown God*.

But in the last place, that if there be any Grounds to carry this Point higher in the *Jewish State*, we must not Argue from every thing ordain'd in the *political Laws* of that People, Especially when God himself was their *Civil Governor*, ready at Hand in a particular Manner to be consulted, to what ought to be the Rule of Government in any other State. And that in this very Instance there might be something very peculiar in the original *Constitution* of that State. It being generally allow'd to have been a *Theocracy* and God himself their King. Therefore any such public *Indignity* to their God was directly *crimen Læsæ Majestatis*, and so might be punished on the same foot that *Treason* or *Cursing* the Civil Governor was punished in any other State. To this it was replied, that the *Theocracy* ceas'd upon the commencement of *t'le Kingly Government* among that people. For which as when it was Demand-
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ed there was no Manner of Reason or Authority advanc'd, so it is really nothing to the purpose; for if the Kings cou'd have punished *Heathens* for such a Practice, it must have been by vertue of *some Law* of God particularly Enjoining 'em to do so. And as this Law was Calculated for the *Theocracy*, the Reason of it must have been what was formerly Assign'd, and therefore must be Entirely *peculiar* to that State, and not to be drawn into precedent now, further than 'tis founded upon the *Eternal Law of order and Reason*.

There was a more plausible Objection started upon this point than any they had offer'd before. For it was alledged, that since by my Principles *Blasphemy as it is punishable by the Magistrate* must be committed against the *acknowledg'd Governor and Judge of the World*, then an *Atheist* cou'd not be punish'd as a *Blasphemer*, because he *acknowledg'd no Supreme Governor or Judge*. To which this Reply was made, If an *Atheist's* crime did not formally amount to *Blasphemy* in my Notion of it, this did not preclude the Magistrate from punishing him for it. Because his *Atheistical Principles* overturn'd the *stable Foundations* of Government, and disbanded all *Society*; and consequently he was *disqualifi'd* from being a Subject, and cou'd have no Pretence from *Conscience* to challenge a Toleration, seeing he destroy'd *Conscience* by Subverting all *Religion*, and so cou'd not be said to have any *Conscience* at all. This last Assertion was like to have open'd a wide Field of Controversy. For in opposition to this, it was advanc'd, That as an *Atheist* is not Capable making any Pretence to *Conscience*, so it ought

be Consider'd on the other Hand, That the Conscience which any might plead *who deny Christ to be GOD*, does not deserve that Name, but ought rather to be call'd *Nescience*: Because when a Person goes into an Error, it is *Ignorance*. Now Conscience in the propriety of Terms is to be *Conscious of Truth*.

AND therefore, whoever is in an Error, cannot be said to have a Conscience in a strict sense, more than an *Atheist*. This set of Notions rais'd a general Surprize, and was not Relish'd so far as I cou'd Observe, by the Party themselves. And the Absurdity thereof was demonstrated in this manner, That upon this scheme of Principles, there could be no such thing as an Erroneous Conscience; which is contrary not only to the Sense of all Divines, and to the Apostle *Paul*, as appears Acts xxiii.

He said to the Council, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience until this Day. When that he was for a great part of his Time under very great and dangerous Mistakes, and in pursuance of 'em, did most Wicked and enormous things. And again, 1 Cor. x. 28: If any Man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice to Idols, Eat not for his Sake that sheweth it, and for Conscience Sake.----- 29 Conscience say, not thine own, but of the others: For why is Liberty Judged of another Mans Conscience? And besides, such a general Assertion, that one Error cou'd not be said to have a Conscience, wou'd intirely Defeat that excellent Doctrine in the Confession of Faith That GOD is Lord of the Conscience. and wou'd Justify Persecutions and Impositions: For the Magistrate, or Ecclesiasticks, need only say, You

You are in an Error, and therefore you have no *Conscience*; it is only *Nescience* in you, and so it is not invading the Prerogative of God to Impose on, or Punish you. But in the midst of all this glaring Light, the same *strange Doctrine* was Repeated and Insisted on. But others being Aware, where this must End, did Interpose, and there was a Stop put to this Debate.

THE old Cavil of charging me with denying the *Supreme Deity of Christ*, was again Repeated; and that I justly call it so, will appear to any who impartially Consider what has been already offer'd in Answer to it, as well as the Weakness of the Pretence upon which it was taken up again under this Article. For all that was Advanc'd to make this out, was that in one Sense I had own'd it to be *Blasphemy to deny Christ to be GOD*, but when I was giving the distinctions of *Blasphemy*, I had never own'd that it amounted to this Crime, to say, *Christ is not the Supreme GOD*, and this was a strong Presumption I did not believe this to be *Blasphemy*, otherwise I would have pronounc'd it to be so in the one Case as well as the other.

BUT the Folly of this way of Reasoning was sufficiently Expos'd by making these two Remarks. 1. That by this Rule of Judging the Inspired Men might be brought under the same Suspicion, for when they Charg'd the *Jews* with *Blasphemy*, for opposing *Christ* and his Doctrine, they had no more than I ever us'd that Phrase, of its being *Blasphemy*, to deny *Christ to be the Supreme GOD*. 2. That according to my Principles I had Asserted, it was

not that sort of *Blasphemy* in a *Heathen* to Deny the *G O D* of the *Jews* to be the *True G O D*, but that every one must see how *Injurious* it were to apprehend from this, that I Denied him to be the *Supreme G O D*, and yet if the *Argument* conclude what is *Alledg'd* against me, it must equally Prove the other also.

THUS have I got thro' the *Arguments*, which seem to have any manner of *Relation* to the *Subject* of this *Article*. But there were some other incidental *Debates*, while it was under *Consideration*, which I must briefly *Mention* to make the *Narrative* Complete and Full. And one main *Particular* of this kind was, the loud *Complaint* against what I had very innocently said in my written *Defence*, about *near one half* of the *Assembly's* not understanding the *Nature* of *Consequences* and the *Manner* of drawing 'em. This was highly *Represented* as a great *Reflection* upon the *Elders*; but whether this serv'd any other *Purpose* than to *Inflame* 'em more against me, must be left to the capable *Reader*, when he sees there was no other *Argument* made use of to show the *Injury* done 'em by my *Remark*, than this, That it is not to be *Denied* that there are some *Consequences* in *Geometry*, *Arithmetick* or *Algebra*, that *near one half* of the *Assembly* are not capable of *Understanding*, but is it therefore *Reasonable* or *Fair* to say that they can't see *Plain* and *Evident Consequences*? To which it was replied in this *Manner*, That all that was granted to be *Undeniable* of *near one half* of the *Assembly*, was equally *True* of the whole, or that there are some *Consequences* in these

parts of Learning, which none of us are capable of Understanding; but it was never pretended to be Reasonable to conclude from this, that any *part of the Assembly* cou'd not see Plain and Evident *Consequences* in matters they had any Knowledge of. No! all that was pronounc'd in this Point, was, That *near one half of the Assembly* did not understand the Nature of *Consequences*, and the Manner of Drawing *em*; and therefore it was but a hard Fate to be Judg'd upon a *Consequence* by such an *Assembly*, which yet requir'd a good measure of Knowledge in Logick, and the art of Reasoning. For that this Point in Debate, whether an *universal Negative*, or *Indefinite*, Proposition, did always exclude all *Restrictions*, and *Limitations* was really such, from which the *Consequence* was drawn, as appears by this Article of the *Libel*. Upon which it was justly Requir'd, by a very judicious Elder, that what an *Indefinite Proposition* was, should be Explain'd: For, that as he did not, so he believ'd many others did not Understand, what was Meant by it: Which fully Confirm'd the *Justice* of my Remark, and does clearly show whether this was so Plain a *Consequence*, as that there cou'd be no Danger of *near one half of the Assembly's* being at a Loss about it, even after the Member, who Argu'd at this Rate, did Explain it in this wise, *Indefinite*, that is, *Universal*, or which is *not Restricted*. And thereby gave another shrewd Instance of his exact Knowledge and profound Learning.

AND when the *Managers* and their *Party* had thus beat round every Particular they cou'd think to lay hold on in my Letter, or

Answer

Answer to their *Libel*, and were quite driven out of all their Pretences : They then betake 'em selves to Condemn the *Proposition* in such a Manner, as to cast a squint Look on me. Some did openly Argue, That it was contain'd in the Letter, in an *indefinite unlimited Sense*, and as extending to all that might be call'd *Blasphemy* in any Meaning of the Word, and to make this Good, the *Proposition* was Read many a time, without any Regard to what goes before, or is Contain'd in other Parts of the Letter; and as often it was asked with a surprizing Assurance, *what must we not trust our own Eyes? will any Persuade us out of our Senses, that these words are not in the Letter, or not in the Form of an Indefinite Proposition?* But the Iniquity of quoting Words out of any Writing in such a Manner was Display'd with that degree of Evidence, that 'tis astonishing to think that the power of Prejudice shou'd be sufficient to hinder Men from seeing what was so Clear ! For these two Examples were brought out of Scripture, Psal. xiv. 1. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no GOD.* Where at first View it must appear, what horrid Abuse it wou'd be of the Psalmist to take the last Words, *There is not a GOD*, and Condemn 'em as his Proposition. Again, *Drink and be Drunken*, are the Words of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxv. 27. But it were the most manifest Injury to take these Words *abstracted* from their Scope and Connexion, and conclude that here is in so many Words a plain Encouragement to *Drunkenness and Intemperance*; when in Reality they are no more than a Prophetical saying, importing either Men's being fill'd with a Spirit

of Infatuation, or that the Judgments of GOD, and the Cup of his Wrath wou'd fill 'em with Astonishment, and with unsettled Counsels and Resolutions, like Men that are Mad or overcome with Drink. This was far from Satisfying some, they wanted to have the Propositions run Parallel with mine, and wou'd not advert to the tendency of the Reasoning, which was only to shew, how Absurd a thing it was, to take any single *Proposition* stript from its *Connexion*, and Judge of it in that Manner; nothing will please 'em, but Voting whether the *Proposition* was an *Indefinite one in the Letter*? and then whether *Offensive* or not?

THIS very Debate took up several Hours, and they had form'd the Minute in such a Manner, that the *Proposition* was pronounc'd to be Contained in my *Letter*, in an *indefinite* and *unlimited* Sense, and therefore to be Condemn'd. But after much Reasoning they were Persuaded to alter this, and let the Minute run in these following Words.

Die Merc. Jun. 24. Hora 4ta. a Merid. Sederunt post Preces.

' Mr. N--'s Affair was Resumed, and he
' was heard again upon the *third Article*, and
' also the *Committee* appointed to Manage that
' Affair were heard; and after Reasoning, it
' was moved that the Synod come to this Resolution, *That this Proposition* referr'd to in
' the *third Article* of the Charge against Mr. N.
' viz. *That 'tis no Blasphemy in the Jews to deny*
' *Christ to be GOD*, which is contain'd in the
' *Fifth Page* of Mr. N--'s. Letter, if understood
' *Univer*

Universally or Indefinitely is False, Offensive and Injurious to the Honour of our blessed Lord, and therefore is a sufficient Ground of Process against him. And Mr. N. being Removed, the Question was put, Approve the above Resolution or not? and it carried unanimously Approve. Here Mr. N. being call'd, and he having before the Vote declared his Sense of the above Proposition, and demanded that it might be enter'd into the Records, and the Synod having promised him that Liberty after the Vote; he declared his Sense of the above Proposition in the following Words, *As I had not in the Conversation (at Mr. Hannington's) maintained that Proposition as some may Understand it, that denying Christ to be GOD was no Sin or Error, or not Reviling our blessed Saviour, so I had (both there, and in the Letter) expressly declared against that Sense of it, and Limited it so, that all may see, I only meant of it Blasphemy, as it is a Crime punishable by the Civil Magistrate; but in any other Sense I did and (still) do Condemn it as much as any Member of this Synod.* Then the Synod came to this Resolution, that they do refer the further Enquiry into, and the Trial of this Article to the Presbytery of Down with such Correspondents as this Synod shall appoint. And now let the Reader Judge what all this Bustle was about, and what they were able to bring this MIGHTY MATTER to! They formed a Minute, the plain Purport whereof is, to confirm that Distinction of Blasphemy, which I made the great Foundation of my Defence; and so the whole is reduced into this narrow Compass, whether when I dropt this Proposition at the first Conversation, I had delivered it in the strict and restrain'd Notion of Blasphemy,

or meant it of whatever cou'd be call'd *Blasphemy* in any Sense of the Word? and to settle this Important Point, a solemn Tryal must be order'd before the Presbytery of *Down* and Correspondents. When yet the very *Affidavit* which was made the Handle of all the *Offence taken at me*, did fairly insinuate, that it was about the *Power of the Magistrate in punishing Offenders against THE SECOND TABLE of the Law* that the *Conversation* was; when I had own'd it to be a *Sin and Error in the Jews to deny Christ to be GOD*; when if it appear'd that I spoke any such thing in the *Conversation*, that I believed *Christ to be GOD*, it is beyond all Exception, I cou'd only mean it of *strict and formal Blasphemy*, and after I had some *Hundreds* of times express'd it in their Hearing, and enter'd it into their *Records* in the *STRONGEST TERMS*; this Matter must be further Enquir'd into. It was agreeable enough to me, that they shou'd make the strictest and most impartial Search into it: But when, for after Reasons they utterly Declin'd to be any further concern'd in my Tryal, but said with a great deal of *Vehemence and Anger*, Let his Friends take what Methods they please to wipe off the *Stain and Reproach*. I must now leave it to the Conscience of every Man, to consider and weigh how much there is in this and the other Parts of the *dreadful Charge* against me, which was referr'd to the Presbytery of *Down*.

It was my own Desire indeed, and several Moderate Impartial Members to have Referr'd this with the Preceeding *Articles* to my own Presbytery, without ever the Synod's dipping into them at all. But since they Canvass'd the Matter so fully before 'emselfes, and thereby cou'd

could not but see, that the whole must Terminate at last in what was the *fourth Article* of the *Charge* against me; for which I was content to be Immediately brought into Judgment, I can't but think I have Reason to complain that all this *apparatus* for an after Tryal, was but meer trifling, and without any shew or Color of Justice.

Proceedings on the Fourth Article.

I Come now to the fourth *Article*, where the Debates were Carried on with a great deal of Warmth, and their Proceedings were more Surprizing and Extraordinary than on any of the former. This was the *Article* they were still for mixing with all the Preceeding ones, and the *Managers* were every now and then discovering a strange Itching and fondness to be let Loose to Maul me for it. The Principle I Maintain'd in asserting, that the *Jews by denying Christ to be God did not render them Obnoxious to punishment from the Secular Powers*, was often call'd a Dangerous Error, and many Arguments and Demonstrations were promised to prove it so. The *Moderator* from the Chair at the very Entrance with a Solemn Look and Frown, pronounc'd it was *Blasphemy* in every Sense of the Word, in the *Jews to deny Christ to be GOD*, and that undoubtedly they ought to be *punished* for it. But what all this came to at last, the Sequel will clearly show. And I flatter myself, the Temptation to it will appear

appear so Strong, every one will forgive me this little piece of Pedantry, when I pronounce of all their Threatning and big Words, *Par-turiant Montes*, &c.

I shall be more willing to consider every Particular that can seem Material to the Subject of this *Article*, because it is of great Importance both to *Religion* and *Civil Society*. For tho' the *Party* saw fit to Drop it, after all the Noise they made about it, and as appears by the Minute were just prepared to have Determin'd this *Article* by a Decisive Vote against me (For in spite of Reason, and the Natural order of Proceeding, they carried that this Question shou'd be put, *whether Mr. N--'s Proposition as Explain'd by him in the 8. page of his Letter contain just Ground of Offence, that is, sounds harsh in pious Ears or not?* Which is always a certain Proof in such Cases, that the Question will also Carry, when 'tis put, just as those who Vote for it in Preference to another Question have a Mind it shou'd) yet it was plain this was only owing to the Influence of some *Cautious Men* among 'em, and not that they did not still stand by the *Principles*, they openly advanc'd in the Synod and Vehemently contended for: For some of the Chief Managers, and several Angry Brethren oppos'd it being Dropt to the Last.

It is Melancholly to think that the Church of Christ has Express'd a strange liking to *Penal Laws* in Cases of Different Religious Sentiments ever since the Magistrate came into her Bosom. They have been frequently used and in great Esteem, not by the Tyranny and Ambition of Princes only: But orthodox Councils

vast Assemblies of the Clergy, and the most Eminent Church-men did always Solicite these Laws, and most highly Commended these Princes, who were most Zealous in the Execution of 'em. But it is no less astonishing, that Men who have Smarted 'emselves under the Lash of these *wholesome Severities*, shou'd not have their Eyes open, to discover the Wickedness and absurdity of *using force* in matters purely Religious ! But so it is, that many of the first Reformers 'emselves after having Rejected so many follies and Heresies of the Church of *Rome*, did still Retain the *Doctrine of Constraint*, by which they had suffer'd the most amazing Hardships and Cruelties. And now when the Legislature in these Nations has Renounc'd in so great a Measure all the Degrees of *Persecution*, yet some are found among Dissenters, who have been but lately reliev'd from the danger of *Penal Statutes*, who are for crying up the *Magistrate's* Right to Inflict at least *Moderate Penalties* for different Religious Sentiments. While they loudly complain of Legal Incapacities which those of their own Denomination are under for their Conscientious Scrupling the Sacramental Test. This was the only Point of any Moment, which was Debated under this *Fourth Article*, and is indeed the very *Explication of the Words*, which according to 'em seems to sound harsh in pious Ears ; And therefore without Spending any time upon the argument taken from my Giving thanks to Mr. Smith for sending me the Copy of the *Affidavit*, to Prove that I must have been Sensible of the Truth of this part of the Charge, and be convinc'd that it wou'd sound harsh in pious

R Ears ;

Ears ; or some other Strokes of *Criticism* upon the Letter, as my Seeming to own that the *Generality of Christians* did look upon the *Jews* guilty of *Blasphemy*, and Misrepresenting the Confession of Faith and charging it with *Wickedness and Absurdity*, all which were offer'd as so many clear and direct Proofs of this fourth Article ; without Spending time, I say, on these poor Cavils, that were wholly Impertinent to the Matter in Hand, I shall confine myself to give an account of what pass'd in the Synod on the grand Point already Mention'd. Which I shall do in the following Method. I. Set down the *Doctrine and Principles* which were advanc'd and maintain'd in Opposition to me on this Head.

II. REPRESENT the *Arguments* which were adduc'd in support thereof together with the *Replies* which were given to them.

III. GIVE a Detail and illustrate the force of the *Arguments* which were offered in *Defence* of my Explication.

AND Lastly, Make some Reflections upon the conduct of the Party on this Article.

THE Substance of the *Doctrine* advanc'd in Opposition to me on this Head, was this, that tho' the *Magistrate* was not to knock the *Jews* o' th' Head, yet it was certainly his duty to punish *Blasphemy* of whatever kind according to the nature and Demerit of it. Some Degrees of *Blasphemy* he may Justly punish with Death and others only with fines, Imprisonments, Banishment, and such moderate Penalties, even tho' according to the Dictates of the Criminals Conscience, it be far from *Blasphemy*, yet if it be really so in itself, 'tis his Office to Suppress, i.

to check, restrain, and punish it with *smaller Penalties*. And that the *Christian Magistrate* having more Knowledge of the will of God, than such as have no other Rule but the Light of Nature, is oblig'd to improve that Gift for the Glory of God, in *punishing* what now he discovers to be Dishonourable to the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth by the additional Light of the Scriptures, and therefore must have a Commission to *suppress* and punish all, who are guilty of what is *Blasphemy* according to the *Doctrine* laid down in these Inspired Volumes, concerning the *Nature, Perfections* and *Number of Persons to be Worshipped as GOD*, or at least he may *restrain* Men from Professing openly, and venting any Principles contrary thereunto, oblige 'em to *silence*, and *punish* 'em for not Conforming 'emselves to his Laws, and Statutes. These are the *Principles*, which were given out as the sense of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* on this Head, not asserted only in the heat of Disputation, but supported to the last by the Chief *Managers*, and strongly argued for by many others in the whole Course of the Debate. Nay and when it was upon the Point of being *dropt*, one of 'em who has signaliz'd himself for *Challenges* of this kind, Provok'd any to contradict that sense of the *Confession* either by Word or Writing, and they shou'd be surely Answer'd. So that this is doing many of 'em no Injustice to publish these *Principles* to the World as their fix'd and Deliberate Sentiments.

THE Arguments they went upon were generally these.

I. THAT the *Magistrate* is appointed to be a terror to *Evil-Doers*, *Custos utriusque Tabula*, and is Oblig'd to punish Sin. Upon this Principle it was urg'd against my Proposition very Roundly in the following Manner. " It must
 " be confess'd that to revile the Ruler of God's
 " People is punishable by the Law, but it seems,
 " that to Revile the King of Kings is not pun-
 " ishable by the Law. What I infer, says the
 " Manager, is, that 'tis strange that it shou'd
 " be lets Criminal to Revile Jesus Christ than
 " one of his Subjects. For I suppose Offences
 " receive their Aggravation from the Objects
 " against which they are Committed. It is a
 " great Offence to Revile the Magistrate, and
 " shall it not be Criminal to Revile the great
 " King of Kings? Now 'tis plain from the
 " whole of Mr. N--s Defence, that the Jews
 " are not punishable for denying Christ to be GOD,
 " which yet he owns to be Reviling him. Which
 " is as much as to say, Let a Man Blaspheme
 " the Worthy Name by which he is call'd,
 " (but he forgot that the Debate was about the Jews
 " who are not called by the Name of Christ) yet
 " he is not to be punished. Is not this a pret-
 " ty Construction, that a Crime against an
 " Earthly Magistrate, which comparatively speak-
 " ing is but of an inferior Nature, shall be
 " Severely punished, and yet to Reflect on t'e
 " great King and Head of the Church shall go
 " unpunished " ? And when it was sometime
 " after Observed, that the same Manager alledg'd
 " the

the Party were not for Hatchets and Halters ; but only some lesser punishments, when his Argument taken from punishing such as Revile the Magistrate wou'd certainly Infer the severest Penalties, he broke thro' the Contradiction, which seem'd to be between that Assertion and the speech I have now set down in this Manner. " I did advance a Position Yesterday " which I will Endeavor to maintain, that Offences Receive their *Aggravations* from the " Objects. The Reason was that *Blasphemy* " was Sin, and it was the Magistrat's business to *suppress* it, and do it in a way consistent with the good of the State.---- The " Magistrate has a Power to punish Offenders, " and *Blasphemy* being a heinous Sin, he is to " take care to punish that Particularly, but not " Every kind of it with *Hanging*." I have purposely set down the Manager's own Words, that it may be seen I have not Misrepresented his Arguments, nor charg'd him and his Party with other *Principles* than they hold, nor other *Arguments* than were Expressly advanc'd.

THE Answer that was given to this, turn'd on these two Points. I. That the *Magistrate* does not punish Persons according to the greatness or smallness of their Crimes consider'd as *Transgressions* of the Law of God, but in so far as they are more or less hurtful to *Civil Society*. He that lives in the open and continued Neglect of several of God's Laws is undoubtedly the greater Sinner, than he that *Steals* a Cow or a Horse, and yet the latter is Hang'd, and the other Escapes all punishment. For the one invades the Property and Right of his Neighbour, and thereby disturbs the peace and good order

order of the State. And yet the other in several Instances such as *Covetousness*, *Uncharitableness*, *Idleness* and many other things, may be no way prejudicial to other Men's Rights, nor break the publick Peace of Societies; and therefore not to be punished by the *Magistrate*, whose only province, by the impartial Execution of equal Laws, is to secure to all the People in general, and to every one of his Subjects in particular, the Just possession of things belonging to this Life. II. The *Jews*, and *Heathens* too, notwithstanding their Sin in denying Christ to be God, might not be these *Evil-Doers*, to whom the *Magistrate* is to be a Terror. It is plain the Apostle applies that Expression to the *Roman Governor*, when he was a stranger and Enemy to Christ: and consequently these he was to be a Terror to, must be *Evil-Doers* in some other than a *Religious Capacity*, even in a *social*; and then that must be with respect to their outward Actions, which immediately affect the well-being and comfort of *Human Society* in Civil Concerns. But because this seems to be the *Principal Error* of all the Party, who were driving this Matter to the length of Censuring and Condemning the above Proposition, and because I am aware, what Influence they may have in Propagating such mistaken dangerous Principles. I shall transcribe these Considerations out of the *Ingenious Letter on Toleration*, which abundantly demonstrate, that the whole Jurisdiction of the *Magistrate* reaches only to *Civil Concernments*, and that all *Civil Power*, Right and Dominion, is bounded and confin'd to the only care of promoting these things, and that it neither can nor ought to be Extended.

ed to the *Salvation of Souls*. V. Letter in *Locke's*
Works. Vol. II. p. ²³⁴₁₇₁₄

“ *First*, Because the Care of Souls is not
“ committed to the Civil Magistrate, any more
“ than to other Men. It is not committed
“ unto him, I say, by God ; because it ap-
“ pears not that God has ever given any such
“ Authority to one Man over another, as to
“ compel any one to his Religion. Nor can any
“ such Power be vested in the Magistrate by
“ the *Consent of the People* ; because no Man
“ can so far abandon the Care of his own Sal-
“ vation, as blindly to leave it to the Choice
“ of any other, whether Prince or Subject, to
“ prescribe to him what Faith or Worship he
“ shall embrace. For no Man can, if he would,
“ conform his Faith to the Dictates of another.
“ All the Life and Power of true Religion
“ consist in the ⁱⁿ outward and full Persuasion of
“ the Mind ; and Faith is not Faith without
“ believing. Whatever Profession we make, to
“ whatever outward Worship we conform, if
“ we are not fully satisfied in our own Mind
“ that the one is true, and the other well plea-
“ sing unto God, such Profession and such Practice,
“ far from being any Furtherance, are indeed
“ great Obstacles to our Salvation. For in
“ this manner, instead of expiating other Sins
“ by the Exercise of Religion, I say in offer-
“ ing thus unto God Almighty such a Wor-
“ ship as we esteem to be displeasing unto
“ him, we add unto the Number of our o-
“ ther Sins, those also of Hypocrisy, and Con-
“ tempt of his Divine Majesty.

“ *In the second place*. The care of Souls can-
“ not belong to the Civil Magistrate, because
his

“ his Power consists only in outward Force ;
“ but true and saving Religion consists in the
“ inward Persuasion of the Mind, without
“ which nothing can be acceptable to God.
“ And such is the nature of the Understand-
“ ing, that it cannot be compell’d to the Be-
“ lief of any thing by outward Force. Con-
“ fiscation of Estate, Imprisonment, Torments,
“ nothing of that nature can have any such
“ Efficacy as to make Men change the inward
“ Judgment that they have framed of things.
“ It may indeed be alledged, that the Ma-
“ gistrate may make use of Arguments, and
“ thereby draw the Heterodox into the way of
“ Truth, and procure their Salvation. I grant
“ it ; but this is common to him with other
“ Men, In teaching, instructing, and redress-
“ ing the Erroneous by Reason, he may certain-
“ ly do what becomes any good Man to do.
“ Magistracy does not oblige him to put off
“ either Humanity or Christianity. But it is
“ one thing to Perswade, another to Command ;
“ one thing to press with Arguments, another
“ with Penalties. This Civil Power alone has a
“ right to do ; to the other Good-will is Autho-
“ rity enough. Every Man has Commission to
“ admonish, exhort, convince another of Error,
“ and by reasoning to draw him into Truth :
“ but to give Laws, receive Obedience and com-
“ pell with the Sword, belongs to none but the
“ Magistrate. And upon this Ground I affirm,
“ that the Magistrate’s Power extends not to the
“ establishing of any Articles of Faith, or Forms
“ of Worship, by the Force of his Laws. For
“ Laws are of no Force at all without Penalties,
“ and Penalties in this Case are absolutely imper-
“ tinent ;

“ tinent ; because they are not proper to convince the Mind. Neither the Profession of any Articles of Faith, nor the Conformity to any outward Form of Worship, (as has been already said) can be available to the Salvation of Souls, unless the truth of the one, and the acceptableness of the other unto God, be thoroughly believed by those that so profess and practise. But Penalties are no ways capable to produce such Belief. It is only Light and Evidence that can work a Change in Mens Opinions ; which Light can in no manner proceed from corporal Sufferings, or any other outward Penalties.

“ *In the third place,* The Care of the Salvation of Mens Souls cannot belong to the Magistrate ; because, though the rigour of Laws and the force of Penalties were capable to convince and change Mens Minds, yet would not that help at all to the Salvation of their Souls. For there being but one Truth, one way to Heaven ; what Hopes is there that more Men would be led into it, if they had no Rule but the Religion of the Court, and were put under a Necessity to quit the Light of their own Reason, and oppose the Dictates of their own Consciences, and blindly to resign up themselves to the Will of their Governors, and to the Religion, which either Ignorance, Ambition, or Superstition had chanced to establish in the Countries where they were born ? In the variety and contradiction of Opinions in Religion, wherein the Princes of the World are as much divided as in their Secular Interests, the narrow way would be much straitned ; one

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“ Country

“ Country alone would be in the right, and all
 “ the rest of the World put under an obliga-
 “ tion of following their Princes in the ways
 “ that lead to Destruction; and that which
 “ heightens the Absurdity, and very ill suits
 “ the Notion of a Deity, Men would owe
 “ their eternal Happiness or Misery to the
 “ places of their Nativity.

THE next *Argument* was built on some Texts of Scripture, which are Quoted in the *Confession of Faith*, not as I believe with any design to Prove that part of the Article, which Relates to *Blasphemy*, but since these Men will have it so, I shan't contend much about it. But whether they consult the Honor of that *Composition* as much as they pretend, by dealing with it in this Manner, shall freely be Left in Judgment by me: While at present I only consider how pertinently the Texts were urg'd by the *Managers* to Establish the Point they had in view, which was this; *That the Magistrate is vested with a Power to Suppress every sort and degree of Blasphemy with some kind of punishment or another; and that particularly the Christian Magistrate may and ought to Inflict at least some moderate Penalties on the Jews for denying Christ to be GOD.* It is scarce to be Imagin'd, what Vaporing and uncommon Assurance was us'd on this Occasion, as if the Evidence of this Proposition was so Overbearing, that none but stupid harden'd Creatures wou'd be able to Resist it!

THE first Text that was Mention'd, was that in *Isaiah 49. v. 23.* *And Kings shall be as Nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy Nursing Mothers.* Which was observ'd to be a Prophecy

cy of Gospel times, and held out the *Magistrate's* care and duty toward the *Church of God*, that as a Parent he wou'd use great *Tenderness*, and tho' he wou'd *punish*, it wou'd be only in a *Mild and Merciful* way, and not by *knocking People o' th' Head*. This Text was however fully demonstrated to have no Relation to the purpose in Hand. And if Men wou'd not stop short, but Read out the Period, they cou'd not but see how strangely it must be perverted, before it can be any manner of Proof, that *Kings and Queens* are to make use of their proper Authority and the Sanctions that support it in *Religious and Ecclesiastical Matters*. For it will appear, that these *Kings and Queens* that are to be *Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mothers* of the Church, must *bow down to it with their Face towards the Earth and lick up the dust of its Feet*. Why don't Men give all this to the Church, as well as a part of it? But only because the Latter part looks 'em very cross in the Face, and has something so shocking in it, when so applied, that they are conscious to 'em- selves it can have no Reference to the Point in Hand? Besides can *Dissenters*, can *Presbyterians*, who have been generally very Zealous for the *herent Independent Power* of the Church, Forget that the *Church of Christ* is not the *Child of Kings and Queens* becoming Christians, but the *other*? Nay and ought they not to be put in Mind, whether they will constantly allow or not, that Christian *Kings and Queens* are part of this very Church, to which they are represented as *Nurses*? And that if the text relates to Christ's Church then Christian *Kings*

and *Queens* are to *Nurse* 'em selves amongst others, and to bow down to themselves, and to lick up the dust of their own Feet: An Observation sufficient to show, If it were not plain from the Context itself, that the *Kings* and *Queens* Spoken of in this Text, are not Persons of the same Nation and Religion with those whose Servants they are represented to be. And therefore that this cannot Relate to the Christian Church under *Christian Rulers*: And therefore some Commentators, as particularly the Learned *Grotius*, understand this Prophecy of *Cyrus*, *Darius*, *Artaxerxes*, as also *Alexander* the Great his Successors, and Especially *Demetrius* who shew'd great favor to the *Jews*, and honor'd the Temple with many Gifts and Privileges. But others, as particularly the Judicious and Excellent *Mr. Locke*, do justly Observe that there is little reason to build much on this promise till the Restoring of *Israel*, when Men see the Gentiles bring *thy* (i. e. the stile of the Chapter seems to import the Sons of the *Israelites*) *Sons in their Arms and Daughters on their Shoulders*, as is promised in the Immediately preceeding Words, they may conclude that then *Kings shall be thy* (i. e. *Israel's*) *Nursing Fathers*, and *Queens thy Nursing Mothers*. This appears to be the time design'd by the Prophecy, and will be found so, upon an attentive Reading that Chapter in *Isaiah*. And thus the Text can do but little service to the Cause, till they make out the meaning better than by barely Quoting of it; which will scarcely ever prove that God hath promised that *Princes*, will be a blessing to the Church, with

they use force to support and propagate what appears to them to be for the Interest and good of Religion.

BUT supposing *Kings and Queens* were to sustain this Character and Relation to the Church, and that this Prophecy were to be fulfilled in this Age, and the Church were now to be their *Nursery*. Sure this figurative promise seems more clearly to import, that their pains and Discipline was to be employ'd on these in the Church and that they shou'd feed and cherish 'em, rather than that these words insinuate, that they shou'd punish the poor *Jews* that are out of it. And this Text will, I suppose, upon a just Consideration signify very little against my Proposition, unless you can find a Country, where the *Cudgel and the Scourge* are more the badges and Instruments of a good *Nurse* than the *Breast and Cradle*, and that she is counted a good *Nurse* of her own Child, who busies herself in *Whipping* Children, not hers, nor belonging to her *Nursery*; as Certainly the *Jews* do not if the Church is the *Nursery* of *Kings and Queens*.

And the same Answer will serve to be made to the following Text. *Psal. 122. 9. Because of the House of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.* For it this is to be Understood of *David's* employing his *Regal* Authority to promote the good of the Church of God, does that any way Relate to these that are no Members thereof, or imply, that he will punish those who differ'd from him in the object of Religious Worship. But it shou'd also be Remember'd, that there wants Evidence to show that all *David's* Actings in Church Affairs

fairs, may be now drawn into precedent by *Temporal Rulers* ? But the sound of the Text is Enough to prove what some Men will have to be all founded on the Word of God ; when yet upon a Closer view the Sense will be found quite different. As a little pains might shew in this very Text, that it is far from speaking of the Office and Power of *Kings* in *sacred Matters*.

BUT indeed their adducing the following Text is the most convincing Proof of this, *Ezra 7: 23. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be diligently done, for the House of the God of Heaven : For why should there be wrath against the Realm of the King and his Sons ? ----- 26. And whosoever will not do the Law of thy God, and the Law of the King , let Judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or to Banishment, or to Confiscation of goods, or to Imprisonment.* It contains an Enumeration of various *punishments* to be inflicted for the several Crimes forbidden in the peculiar Laws of the *Jewish state*. But does that prove the *Magistrate* may now a-days *punish* in any of these different ways, that sort of *Blasphemy* which does not affect the state ? Is there any other *punishment* for *Blasphemy* in the Law of God but *Death* ? And is not this a special Commission given to the Ruler of that People by *Artaxerxes* ? And pray then how does it appear that it any way concerns the *Magistrates* of any other Nation, farther than as it is agreeable to the Essential Rules of Government and Equity ? But as Texts were seldom made use of against me, this cannot be thought strange, if they had none more to their purpose

pose than those I have been now Considering. And yet the other Arguments, they made use of, were if possible, more weak and trifling than the Inferences they pretended to draw from these Scriptures.

FOR another Reason they brought to support their Doctrine was, since 'tis own'd that to deny Christ to be God is reviling him, on this account the Jews ought to be punished by the Civil Magistrate, because Reviling is certainly a Legal Crime. It is true among the natural Rights of Mankind, Reputation and an unblemished Character has always been Reckon'd as a main and Principal one: And therefore it may be Justly made a part of the Magistrate's care to preserve it from all Injury and harm: But then let it be Observed, that this only Extends to such as Live in Subjection to him; And therefore it cannot follow, that all Manner of Reviling of any Persons however Excellent and great in 'emselfes must fall within his Jurisdiction. As to the case of Contemptuous open Reviling and Cursing the Name of Christ, I have not denied but a Magistrate may Justly restrain and punish that, where he is Worshipped as God, and yet this is very consistent with not punishing the Jews for denying him to be so. As is plain from the conduct of the states of Holland towards that People; For there they are Tolerated in the free Exercise of their Religion and open Profession of their Principles, nay are not hinder'd to Argue and publish books in Defence of them; and yet they are Prohibited from using Execrations of the Name of Christ in their Synagogues.

THE last Argument was to this purpose: That Error wou'd grow Rampant, and bear down Truth, if no Restraints or Discouragements were made use of by the *Magistrate* against Seducers; And that Particularly the *Jews* will be harden'd in their *Blasphemy* and Infidelity, when they hear that they may still go on and deny Christ to be God with Impunity. This Argument being much the same with what is taken notice of before under the preceeding *Article*, I shall not repeat what has been Mention'd there in Answer to it. And what I wou'd add to what is there said, is to Observe, that the quite contrary was Asserted and prov'd in Answer to it, *viz.* That Truth wou'd certainly gain Ground, if once all force in Matters purely Religious were laid aside on all Hands. Men wou'd by this means be free from all influence of fear in their Researches after Truth, they wou'd consider every Point with the greatest Impartiality. And they must be very great Strangers in the World, who don't know that *Human Terrors* are the only Support of Error and Heresy in the greatest part of the *Christian* World. And 'tis a base Reflexion on the Truths of the Gospel, to suppose that if they were display'd in their native Lustre and Excellency, and Error stript of all the advantages of Profit, Credit and Ease, they wou'd be in any danger to be rejected and despis'd. Whereas on the contrary, the Rule being once laid down, that the *Civil Magistrate* is to add the *Sanctions of this World*, to Establish the Worship of the true God, and Discountenance all *Blasphemy*, and inflict 'em for disowning and not believing in him: It be-

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comes the Indispensible duty of every *Magistrate* to annex 'em for preserving the Honor of his own *God*, whom he believes to be the only true Object of all Religious Worship, and must *punish* all who don't immediately believe in and adore the same Deity with himself. And as the case of the World is at present, not one *Magistrate* in many who does not Worship a *false God*; Let every one Judge how much Truth wou'd Suffer by laying aside all Compulsive Methods, and whether *Material Blasphemy* wou'd be made less rife in the World, if the *Magistrate* be vested with a Power to *punish* whatever appears to him to be so? For that is the very Truth of it and not overstraining the Point at all. And it is meer *Chicanery* to pretend that only the *Magistrate* who is in the Right, has a Commission to *punish* such as Deny the true *God*. Because every *Magistrate* believes himself Right, and must and will Act accordingly, let him be never so much in the Wrong.

BUT now, 'tis Time I proceed to lay before the Reader, a *Detail of the Arguments* that were offer'd in support of my *Proposition*. And the first was, that vesting the *Magistrate* with a Power to *Punish* whatever appears *Blasphemous* to him, and Dishonouring to the True *God*, wou'd make the Earth a *Scene of Blood, Horror and Confusion*. To Confirm this for an undoubted Truth, these Two Points were insisted on. I. That allowing it to be Just in him to Inflict any manner of *punishment* to Suppress such *Blasphemy*; 'tis unavoidable to allow it to be Just in him to use *punishments* sufficient for that End, nay that he is Oblig'd to do so: Because where the End is a *Duty*, the means conducive to it must be so too. For what can the *Ma-*

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gistrate do, if Men will still go on in a constant
 Defiance to his Laws, to assert opinions, he Judges
 do Dishonour and *Blaspheme* God, or not assert
 others which do Honour him? must he not at last
 come to *Capital punishment*, if he is bound to *Sup-*
press Blasphemy, unless he will suffer God to be
 continually Dishonoured? And therefore, if the *Ma-*
gistrate may apply *coactive Power* in smaller *Instan-*
ces, it is vain to think of prescribing *Measures*, where
 he must Stop. For the same Reason that makes
 any Degree of *Force* unlawful in this Case, will
 make every Degree unlawful, and the same Reason
 that Impowers the *Magistrate* to use moderate
Penalties will bear him out in the *Rigor of Death*,
 when the former are Ineffectual. II. That the
 same opinions are by different Parties in the
 World, treated as Pious and Impious, as Holy
 and *Blasphemous*. And therefore, they must be con-
 tinually Harassing one another, and if nothing short
 will, they must commit the most fearful Butcher-
 ies and Cruelties, till they effectually *Suppress* the
Blasphemies either of one or other Side. And so
Truth has no other chance to get the better in the
Scuffle; but that a poor handful, who may light
 upon her shall have all the World besides, either
 to *Conquer*, or be *Conquered* by. It is certainly great
Blasphemy to ascribe Divinity to an Object, to
 which it does not belong: Now upon the Prin-
 ciple I oppose and for so doing stand in Judgment
 before the Synod, *Heathens* and *Christians* must give
 no Quarters to one another, for each of 'em an-
Blasphemers in the others Opinion. Nay the *Chri-*
stian World itself must be made a *Field of Blood*,
 it were universally believ'd and steadily pursued.
 For if any *Blasphemy* of that kind deserve to
 be punished, then certainly that of the *Papists* for it
 monstrous

monstrous absurdity and daring Impiety against God, must be thought to do so. When they assert, that their Priests by muttering a few Words over their *Wafers*, *Transubstantiate 'em into the Body and Blood, the Soul and Deity of Christ*, so that these *Wafers* are afterwards to be Ador'd as the *Supreme God*, with the highest Degree of Religious worship, and on the other Hand the *Papists*, the worst Part of whose Religion is a Persecuting Spirit, have not been Slack in punishing Protestants as *Blasphemers*, for Denying these *Wafers* to be the *Supreme God*. And Protestants 'emselfes must *Bite and Devour one another, till they are Consumed one of another*. The *Arminians* and *Lutherans*, have accus'd the *Calvinists* of *Blasphemy* as making God the *Author of Sin*, and these are not behind Hand in charging the same Crime on them, as making the Will of God to depend on the Will of Man, and so the *Principle* I am Mark'd out to be censur'd for Rejecting, wou'd lay 'em under a necessity of *Suppressing* one anothers *Blasphemy*, and the Quarrel which has hitherto been carried on with Anger and Fury enough in their Writings, must be Decided at last by every *Magistrate* in his own Country. And let me now add, that *Calvinists* 'emselfes must fall Foul of one another too, for some of 'em have charg'd others with *Blasphemy* upon their Different Schemes of *Predestination* and Physical Predetermination to sinful Actions. All which can be prevented by no other Means but discarding this *Barbarous principle*, that every Sort and Degree of what may be call'd *Blasphemy* in any Sense of the Word is a Crime punishable by the *Magistrate*; and to believe that nothing is *Formal Blasphemy* as coming within the Sphere of human Laws, but what is so upon principles common to the *Accuser* and the *accused*.

BUT again it was argued, to make use of Force against Men for following the Dictates of their Conscience, when *Civil Society* is not Injur'd or disturb'd thereby, is contrary to the *Genius of the Gospel*; and therefore to suppose the *Christian Magistrate* ought to punish the *Jews for Denying Christ to be God*, is a very gross and dangerous Mistake. Our holy Religion breaths nothing but *Gentleness and Love*. 'Tis its *Glory* that it was Propagated and Established not by *Fire and Sword*, but by *Argument and persuasion only*: *The Weapons of our warfare*, says the Apostle Paul, *are not carnal, but mighty thro' God to the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Our Lord declares himself, his *Kingdom is not of this World*, and consequently not to be Supported or Enlarged by the *Terrors* of it, and notwithstanding the *Sin and Error the Jews* were guilty of in *Denying Christ to be God, or the Messiah*, the Apostle does not think they ought to be punished as *Blasphemers*, but Expresses a very *Benevolent Disposition* to them, * *I cou'd wish said he, that myself were accursed from Christ for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh, who are the Israelites*. And elsewhere, † *that his Hearts desire and Prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be Saved. For I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*. There is not the least Direction in the whole New Testament, calling for help from the *Secular Arm*, no Intimation that when the *Kingdoms of the World*, become the *Kingdoms of God and of his Christ*, that the *Princes* there shou'd enforce the Truths of the Gospel with

* Ro. 9. 3. † ch. 10. 1, 2.

their *Penalties*, where milder Methods did not prevail.

IT was also further urged, that such a *Principle*, if any way Encourag'd by the Gospel, wou'd Effectually have prevented its *Spreading* at first, and must for ever stop its further Progress among the **UNCONVERTED NATIONS**: For we must suppose that any who are Zealous enough to undergo the Dangers and Fatigue of attempting to convert Idolatrous Nations to a Religion, that discharges all manner of Guile and Lying under the Penalty of Forfeiting Heaven, and being cast into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, will be so sincere as to give an Honest Ingenuous Representation of the Principles they came to propagate, and the Methods they were Authoris'd to make use of for that End. And then the Sum of it must be this, You are all *Blasphemers*, while you Deny to Worship the God of the Christians, and you deserve to be Punish'd, if you continue obstinately in your wicked Opposition to the Gospel we Preach. What can we think but that wherever they came, they wou'd be Treated as profest Publick Pests, and be driven away without a further Hearing? And there is no way to Obviate this, but to go thro' Stitch, and roundly assert that these are only *private Instructions* and not to be produc'd, nor insisted upon, till they have gain'd the stronger Party on their Side, and then they may set up for the Right of punishing the Rest as *Blasphemers*. But this must give such a frightful Idea of the Gospel, as must plainly convince every one, that the Principle of which this is the Native consequence, must be wicked, false and strictly Antichristian. It was further urg'd upon this Topic, that if the *Principle* I denied,

nied, had been universally believ'd in the Heathen World, it wou'd not only have effectually hinder'd the Propagation and Establishment of Christianity (For then the Heathen *Magistrates* wou'd have immediately put to Death, all who denied Divinity to their Idols, or ascribed it to the Lord Jesus Christ) But it wou'd produce the immediate Extirpation of Christianity out of the Dominions of the *Sultan*, the *Sophi* of *Persia*, the Great *Mogul*, the Emperor of *China*, and other *Mahometan*, or Heathen *Princes*, and consequently the Slaughter of the Fourth Part of those who bear the Christian Name. Another Argument hinted at in support of the Proposition censur'd by the Committee in this Fourth Article of their Libel, was, that if the *Magistrate* was vested with a Power to suppress every Sort and Degree of *Blasphemy*, he must derive it either from God, or from the People. But it cou'd not be from God, because none ever had or can shew any such Commission, and consequently all Obligation to Obedience wou'd cease, when *Magistracy* is pretended to have its Foundation in an immediate Divine Right, and yet none such appears. Nay, but let us for Argument sake suppose, that Government both as to its Form, and the Persons Intrusted with the Administration of it, is immediately from God, yet still 'tis manifestly Evident that the *Magistrate* has no such Power as to punish every Sort and Degree of *Blasphemy*. Because this wou'd suppose that God has not Reserved to himself the sole Legislative Power, in Matters merely Religious, but has left the *Magistrate* a share in judging what is Honourable or Dishonourable, what is pleasing or what is Injurious to him the Majesty of Heaven. For a Right in the

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Magistrate to punish what he Esteems *Blasphemy*, necessarily supposes it Duty in the Subject to obey, and to believe as he prescribes. But as the *Magistrate* is far from being Qualified for such a Trust, so the Matter of Fact shews, that this wou'd rather spread than suppress *Blasphemy*, it can never therefore be conceived that 'tis agreeable to the Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice of God, to vest the *Magistrate* with any such Power, as wou'd turn to his own Dishonour, and to the common Prejudice of Men.

And therefore in the second Place, it is Evident he has no such Power from the People, Especially if it be consider'd, that as every Man is Endow'd with Reason, he is indispensably oblig'd to follow that, in forming his Apprehensions of Almighty God. But now if the *Magistrate* has such a Power from the People, they must be oblig'd to think always of God, as the *Magistrate* desires, or otherwise be punished as *Blasphemers* by him; But as it is in no Man's Power to Believe or Judge as he pleases, much less as another prescribes, so the Sovereign Right of judging every One for himself, is so inherent, that none can make this Power over to another, so that 'tis impossible that the *Magistrate*, can derive such a Power from the People as to punish 'em, when ever they think differently of the Supreme Judge, and Governour of the World, from what he does, when the Points wherein they differ from him don't in the least disturb or endanger the State.

But that he neither has nor can have such a Power from the People, is clear to a Demonstration, unless the *Magistrate*, can be oblig'd at the same Time to do the most inconsistent and contradictory things. For his immediate Duty, is to
preserve

preserve as much as possible, when 'tis not contrary to the greater good of the Society, the Liberty, the Property, and the Life of every individual Person. But now if he must punish every Sort and Degree of *Blasphemy*, he must often deprive the Members of the Society of their natural or Civil Rights, when the Good of it is not concern'd; since there are several Opinions, that are not only thro' Mistake accounted some Sort and Degree of *Blasphemy*, but are really so, which neither hurt the State or any Subject of it in their Civil concerns; upon this supposition then, the more the good of the Society hinders him, the more he is oblig'd to use this Power, because as the Number of those he judges, or may be truly tainted with the *Blasphemous* opinions increases, so not only the Number of sufferers, but also their sufferings ought to increase, to put a stop to these spreading *Blasphemies*. But the more the Sufferers are, and the more they suffer, the more the Publick is damnified; so that 'tis Evident the *Magistrate* can't be oblig'd to promote the Publick good, and to use this Power. Nay, the very exercising such a Power, is inconsistent with Government, and as far as it Extends destroys it: because a Design to deprive People of their Lives, or their Liberty, or their Property (for the conservation of which Government was Instituted, and which therefore are more Sacred than Government it self,) and a Design to Govern 'em are inconsistent. And has not the *Magistrate* such a Design, when he Invades People's Rights for things not tending to the good of the Society, and which are not in their Power, but Morally impossible; such as acting contrary to their present Light and Persuasion is? And it is a greater

greater piece of Tyranny to punish Men for what is morally, than for what is naturally Impossible. And Consequently the Power of punishing that Blasphemy, which is agreeable to the Dictates of Conscience, and no way Injurious to the State, can never be lodged with the Magistrate by the People.

LASTLY, It was pleaded in Defence of my Proposition, That the *Magistrate* deriving his Commission from the Light of Nature, ought only to *punish* such Crimes as can be discover'd by the Light of Nature: But to *deny Christ to be God* is not a Crime which can be discover'd by the Light of Nature, as Every one must own: And that therefore the *Jews* are not *punishable*, or guilty of *that sort and degree of Blasphemy which comes within the Sphere of Human Laws*. And if it be pretended that the *Magistrate's* Commission is Enlarged by the Gospel Charter, this must be particularly Demonstrated, and the new Powers the *Magistrate* is thereby vested with fully and clearly prov'd. For it is not Enough that the Scriptures are silent here, and that it is not declared unlawful in the *Magistrate* becoming Christian to employ his *coactive Power*, to *suppress the Blasphemy of such as deny Christ to be God*.

ALL that Remains to be done under this Article is to make some Reflexions upon the Conduct of the *Party* about it. And that every one may see, they are just and tend to Enlighten and support my appeal to the Common sense of Mankind, I shall here Insert their own Minute as the only Foundation on which I shall build 'em.

“ THEN the fourth *Article* of the Charge
“ against Mr. N. was Read, and he Read his
“ Answer; and the *Manager's* Replied, and after
“ long Reasoning we agreed to Adjourn to
“ 9 *Mane*.

“ *Die Jovis Jun: 25. Ante Merid: post Preces*
“ *Sederunt.*

“ MR. N. moved that his Tryal may go
“ on, and it was moved by others, that this
“ Synod Adjourn till 6 Afternoon, this was
“ agreed to:

“ *Die Jovis a Merid: post Preces Sederunt.*

“ THE Synod Resum'd the Consideration of
“ Mr. N--'s Affair, and the fourth *Article* of
“ the Charge against him was Read, and he
“ Read his Answer to it, and the Committee
“ Replied to his Answer. And this *Article*
“ was Reason'd upon for a Considerable time.
“ Mr. N. offer'd, that *Blasphemy* coming from
“ the *Jews* denying *Christ* to be God does not
“ come within the *Sphere* of *Human Laws*: And
“ upon a Debate arising from Mr. N--'s Ex-
“ plication of these Words, Mr. N. said that
“ Abstracting from that very *Restriction*, that
“ not *Blasphemy* Capitally punishable, which yet he
“ thinks he had a right to Insist on, that even
“ in the very Explication, which the Commi-
“ tee agrees with him to be contain'd in that
“ part of the Letter, viz: p. 8. in these words,
“ That for a Jew to deny *Christ* to be God is not
“ that sort and degree of *Blasphemy*, which Justly
“ comes within the *Sphere* of *Human Laws*, by
“ which

“ which he Understands it is not punishable by
 “ the Magistrate, a Question was then offer’d,
 “ Whether Mr. N---’s Proposition as thus Ex-
 “ plain’d by him in the 8. p. of his Letter, be
 “ a Relevant ground of Process, or not? Also a-
 “ nother Question was offer’d, viz. Whether the
 “ above Proposition as Explain’d by Mr. N. in
 “ the 8. p. of his Letter contain Just ground of
 “ Offence, or not, that is, sounds harsh in pious
 “ Ears or not? Then the previous Question
 “ was put, whether the first or second Question
 “ shall be put? And it carried that the second
 “ Question shall be put: Then it was moved that
 “ the Question be put, whether that Proposition
 “ in the 8 p. of Mr. N---’s Letter viz that for
 “ the Jews to deny Christ to be God is not that
 “ sort (and degree) of Blasphemy, which comes with-
 “ in the Sphere of Human Laws contains just Grounds
 “ of Offence, that is, sounds harsh in pious Ears
 “ or not? Then it was moved and agreed to
 “ that we Adjourn to 9 Mane:

Die Ven: Jun: 26. Hora 9. ante Merid: post
 Preces Sederunt.

‘ MR. N---’s Affair was Resum’d, and he was
 heard upon that State of the Question, which
 was carried at Last Sederunt that it shou’d be
 put. And after Reasoning it was moved, that
 whereas the Deciding the Truth or Falsehood
 of the above Proposition referr’d to in the Ques-
 tion, wou’d lead us into a Controversy con-
 cerning the Extent of the Magistrate’s Power which
 is not proper for this Synod to determine, that
 we drop the further Consideration of that fourth
 Article, and the Question was put, Drop or not?

' And it carried *Drop*'. What conclusion they came to at last has been seen in the Minute above Inserted. And now I wou'd Remark in the first place upon their Conduct, That it is plain they were open advocates for the *Magistrate's* Extending his Jurisdiction to the affairs of *Conscience and Religion*, and for his *punishing* any who think in these matters otherwise than he does. And how consistent this is with their being *Dis-senters*, Let the World and themselves in their Cool thoughts Impartially Judge ! It will stand 'em in no stead, that the Point they were contending for in this, is the great Foundation of the Christian Faith : For if the *Magistrate* may *punish* such as Differ from him in things of such a high Nature, and he is the *Guardian* of Momentous truths, and the *Director* of Men's *Con-sciences* in them, 'tis hard to conceive that he is not to be Obey'd in things of an Inferior Nature, and has not Equal Right to *punish* such as Differ from him, and Refuse to conform 'em selves only to Ceremonies of his Appointment : For if they appear Sinful to them, it does not alter the Case, this cannot Superfede his Right to *punish* 'em, otherwise the Jews are not to be *punished* for Refusing to own *Christ to be God*, for that appears also Sinful to them.

BUT in the second place I make this Observation on their Conduct, that as the Charge was laid against me in ambiguous Terms, in their Prosecution they took all the advantage they cou'd of the *Uncertainty* of the Words they made use of. In the Minute and the *Article* now before us, we are supplied with
Remarkable

Remarkable Instance of this Kind, we have two Phrases, one made use of to Explain the other; but in reality they are both general Expressions without any Determinate Meaning. Not to insist upon the unfairness of this in the case of an Accusation, where the Charge shou'd be made *special* & in the plainest Words, I shall content myself with showing how Ridiculously they applied and understood each of these Phrases as it won'd serve their Turn; and for that purpose need only Mention some Remarks that were made upon 'em in the Face of the Synod. As to the first, viz. *Sounding harsh in pious Ears*. This at the beginning was allow'd to be taken as Equivalent to that of being false, with this additional aggravation, that it was grievous and stumbling to *pious* Souls, that such a Dangerous Error shou'd be vented by a *Gospel Minister*. But when they found it was like to be so Difficult a Point to prove it false, they shrunk from this meaning, and wou'd alledge that it might *sound harsh in pious Ears*, tho' it was not false: And here they Insisted that the manner of Expression was *harsh*: To which it was Replied, that it was not the Proposition itself, but the *Explication* of it, that in the Judgment of the Committee seem'd to *sound harsh in pious Ears*, and it was ask'd in the Words of my written Answer, *what kind of pious Ears must they be, in which it will sound harsh that the Jews are to be Tolerated among Christians and not punished by the Magistrate as Blasphemers?* But it being still urg'd that there was a difference between Erroneous and *sounding Harsh*, a Proposition mayn't be absolutely false, and yet *sound harsh in the Ears* of Honest good People. This

trifling

trifling at last Extorted a very Comical and Diverting Reply, that tho' this shou'd be true, it cou'd never be *just Ground of Offence at me*: For there was a Common Report the Synod 'emselves had made acts, which *sounded harsh in pious Ears*. For Example 'tis said in the Pacific Act, that the Condidate is allow'd if he Scruple Phrase or Phrases in the Confession, &c. which when some People heard, 'tis Reported it *sounded verry harsh* to them. As particularly that in one Congregation one or more Elders, said they wou'd not suffer their Minister to Read that Act publickly before the People, because they were sure there were no *phrases in the Confession*, For they were good Honest Folk that made it and *phras'd none. This kindled no little Passion, but quite sham'd 'em out of their quibbling on this Point.

Now this of *sounding harsh* being expressly us'd as Equivalent to the other of being *Offensive*, this lets us into the Idea they had affix'd to the last, for as a Proposition not Erroneous may in their Sense *sound harsh in pious Ears*, that is in their own Construction may be *Offensive* and so it can amount to no more than this, that my *Explication* may make the minds of some *pious People uneasy* in the Notions and Opinions, which they before rested in. If Persons are *Offended* at Truth, it is their fault and not his that Delivers it. It is an *Offence taken not Given*, as Divines Express 'emselves.

* a Term us'd in the common Scotch Dialect to signify *Speaking wide* or in a *Romantic Strain*.

And

And no doubt the *Committee* were in the Right to Intitle' their Libel *Grounds of Offence taken at me*. For upon Enquiry it will be found I had given None ; Unless asserting Principles which tend to inspire Men with *universal Love* and *Charity*, and to pluck up by the Roots every degree of Rancor and a persecuting Spirit, must be accounted such. And if any of my Zealous Brethren and their admirers will still continue to take *Offence* at this, I must say 'tis neither a *Crime* nor a *Scandal*. But I must do that Justice to all the *Party*, to declare that I don't Remember that so much as once they ventur'd to pronounce the *Proposition*, in my Sense of it, *Scandalous*. And yet it must be Matter of process against a Minister only because it seems to sound harsh in pious Ears. If this Rule were uniformly pursued, that whatever may seem to sound harsh in pious Ears, or be so far *Offensive* shou'd be made Ground of *Accusation* against Ministers, I am confident Synods and Presbyteries wou'd find Work enough. But the Church of Scotland has set us another and wiser Example. For nothing is Esteem'd among 'em *Scandalous*, i. e. Ground of Process, but what is accounted so by the *Word of God*, or by some act or *universal Custom* in the Church agreeable thereunto. And how far the Conduct of the *Party* upon this *Article* and every part of the *Libel* they went thro' has been in direct Opposition to that Fundamental Rule of *Discipline*, methinks, is so plain, that I may leave it to the Judgment of every one of Common Sense.

AND here I can't but Observe, as one of the *Party* who Carried the Decisive Vote against me under the following *Article*, knows,
I was

I was prepar'd to have represented to the Synod 'emselves, that tho' in their *Libel* and *Minute* relating to my Explication of *that* Proposition, they have used much the same Words with the *Pope*, in his famous *Bull* and *Constitution* *UNIGENITUS* against *Father Quesnell*, yet they did not show the same Consistency with 'emselves and good Sense, that his *Holiness* did. For if he pronounc'd *Father Quesnell's* Propositions to be *sounding ill in and Offensive to pious Ears*, he also condemn'd 'em as *False, Scandalous, Wicked and Erroneous* : But with the *Committee* and this *Party* a Proposition may be *sounding harsh in and Offensive to pious Ears*, when it is neither *False, Wicked, Erroneous*, nor so much as once declar'd to be *Scandalous* : But in very deed a great and Glorious Truth, as well as many of the Propositions condemn'd by the *Pope's Constitution*.

AND now I hasten to the Fifth Article, which was the *CRISIS* of the whole affair : And because it is that, wherein my Conduct may be most generally blam'd, I shall choose to set before the World the *Sentiments* of others on this Head ; For having got a Copy of the Reasons of the *Protestation* Enter'd by several Members against the *Resolutions* of the Synod on *this Article*, and having Compar'd the Reasons advanc'd for it with the Notes that were taken in short hand during the Tryal, and finding that every thing that is any way Material in the Debates upon these *Resolutions* fully and clearly represented, I shall insert them as the best *Narrative* I can give of the Reasonings as well as of the Issue and Conclusion of the Tryal.

BUT that the Reader may be better able to apprehend the Strength of the following Reasons, I shall insert the Entire Minutes of the Synod on this Fifth Article, that he may have a perfect view of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Synod against which the Members Protested, and it will Enlighten the Matter further, if the Reader wou'd take a Review of the Fifth Article as it stands in the Libel, and my Answer to it in the written Defence, p. 66.

Die. Ven: Jun: 26. Hora 9a ante: Merid:

“ THEN the 5th Article of the Complaint
“ against Mr. N-- was Read, and he Read his
“ Answer. And the *Managers* Replied, and af-
“ ter Reasoning it was moved by the Mana-
“ gers, that Mr. N-- shou'd make a DECLA-
“ RATION of his Belief of the SUPREME
“ DEITY of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they
“ alledged that his making such a Declaration
“ wou'd be for the Glory of God; the Edificati-
“ on of this Church, and wou'd in a great Measure
“ Remove the Offence he had given. This Mo-
“ tion was Reasoned a long time. And Mr.
“ N-- declin'd to comply with it. He alledged
“ that to make any such DECLARATI-
“ ON in his present Circumstances, when there is
“ a PROCESS Commenced against him, as if
“ he had given Ground for many to Suspect and
“ believe he Entertain'd and Vented the CON-
“ TRARY ERROR, wou'd be to Subject
“ (himself) to an Inquisitory Method, which appears
“ to him Repugnant to the Essential Rules of Equi-
“ ty, to the Discipline, which Christ has Establish-

“ ed in his Church, and to the usual and known
 “ Method of Issuing Scandal in this and other Pres-
 “ byterian Churches. And that therefore in C O N-
 “ S C I E N C E he cannot comply with said de-
 “ mand, being what he thinks directly S I N-
 “ F U L.

“ T H E N the Question was offer'd, whether
 “ we think it our Duty for the Glory of God, the
 “ Edification of this Church, and Mr. N---'s own
 “ Vindication to Require, that Mr. N-- in the
 “ present Circumstances shou'd make a Declaration
 “ of his belief of the Supreme Deity of our Lord
 “ Jesus Christ? Then another state of the Quest-
 “ tion was put, whether the 5th Article con-
 “ tain Relevant Ground of Process or not? And
 “ then it was moved, that the previous Quest-
 “ tion be put, which of these Questions be-
 “ put? and the previous Question being put, it
 “ carried, that the first Question shall be put:
 “ And the first Question was put, viz. Whether
 “ we think it our Duty for the Glory of God, the
 “ Edification of this Church and Mr. N--'s own
 “ Vindication to R E Q U I R E Mr. N-- to make
 “ a Declaration of his belief of the Supreme Deity
 “ of our Lord Jesus Christ? And it carried in
 “ the Affirmative by a great Majority.

“ M R. Thomas Shaw Protested against the two
 “ last Votes, and Mr. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Abernethy
 “ Mr. Haliday, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Clugston, Mr.
 “ Simson, Mr. Thomas Maclaine, Mr. Williamson
 “ Mr. Michael Bruce, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Harper
 “ Mr. Thomas Wilson, Ministers. And Col. Brice
 “ Mr. Magee, Capt. Macculloch, and Patrick Gell-
 “ Eblers, Joyned in the Protest, and they Re-
 “ serve to themselves a Liberty to give their
 “ Reasons in due time.

“ M

“ MR. N. was then call’d and the Moderator
 “ REQUIRED him for the Glory of God,
 “ the Edification of this Church and his own VIN-
 “ DICATION, to make a Declaration of his belief
 “ of the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 “ and Mr. N-- gave in his Answer in
 “ these Words ; “-- Before I went out I Declar’d
 “ it to be my Judgement, that to make any such
 “ DECLARATION IN MY PRE-
 “ SENT CIRCUMSTANCES, when I
 “ was under Prosecution as if I Maintain’d the
 “ CONTRARY ERROR, was directly Sin-
 “ ful. I am still of the same Opinion, and there-
 “ fore must utterly refuse to comply, with what is
 “ now REQUIRED of me ; It being my ab-
 “ solute Duty to OBEY GOD RATHER
 “ THAN MAN. But I hope this Rev’d
 “ Synod will still Remember, that I Profess’d, this
 “ was not from any DISBELIEF of that
 “ DOCTRINE of the SUPREME DEITY
 “ of Christ.

“ Adjourned to 5 Afternoon ; Concluded with
 “ Prayer.

“ Die Ven Jun : 26 Hora 5ta a Merid : post Pre-
 “ ces Sederunt.

“ MANY Members of the Synod moved that
 “ in Regard Mr. N-- refused to make any De-
 “ claration of his Belief of the Supreme Deity of
 “ our Lord Jesus Christ, that they have not free-
 “ dom to SIT IN SYNOD with him, or to be any
 “ further Concerned in his TRYAL. Mr.
 “ N-- was heard, and after Reasoning, a Ques-
 “ tion was offer’d, seeing Mr. N-- has Refused

“ to make a Declaration of his Belief of the Su-
 “ preme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, when De-
 “ manded by this Synod, whether we of this Synod
 “ shall have any further **MINISTERIAL**
 “ **COMMUNION** with him the said Mr.
 “ N--- and proceed any further in his **TRIAL**
 “ or not? And the Question being put, it Car-
 “ ried **NO** by a great Majority.
 “ **MR.** Kirkpatrick Dissented from and Protec-
 “ ted against this Resolution, and Desired that
 “ his Dissent and **PROTESTATION** may
 “ be Enter’d into our Records. And Mr.
 “ Abernethy, Mr. Michael Bruce, Mr. Haliday,
 “ Mr. Thomas MacLaine, Mr. Thomas Wilson,
 “ Mr. Shaw, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Clugston, Mr.
 “ Harper, Mr. Simson, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Archib-
 “ bald MacLaine Junr. Ministers, and Col. Brice,
 “ Capt. Macculloch, Pat. Getty and John Hawthorn
 “ Elders Joyn’d in the Dissent and Protestation.
 “ And they think themselves Bound by
 “ the Laws of the Gospel to Maintain **MINIS-**
 “ **TERIAL COMMUNION** with Mr.
 “ N--- Notwithstanding the Resolution of this
 “ Synod Excluding him, which they look upon
 “ as **UNJUST & UNWARRANT-**
 “ **ABLE** because **CONVICTED OF**
 “ **NOSCANDAL.** Mr. N--- was call’d in
 “ and the Sentence of the Synod Intimated to
 “ him.

Mr.

“ **Mr. Robert Mcc.Bride** desi-

“ red that his Sense of the above Vote may
 “ be Enter’d into our Records in the
 “ following Words,

“ **ALTHO’** I voted, I was not free to allow
 “ Mr. N--- to sit in Synod, who had Declined to
 “ give a Declaration of his Belief of the Supreme Dei-
 “ ty of Our Blessed Redeemer, when Demanded by the
 “ Synod, to do it in a Spirit of MEEKNESS, and
 “ under the awful Impressions of the Fear of the Great
 “ God, yet my Voice is not to be construed, as if I
 “ unminister’d all these who are of different Sentiments
 “ from me in Point of Church Government. For I al-
 “ low the Clergy of the Established Church, and these
 “ of the Independent THOUGHT, to be Ministers of
 “ the Gospel. But don’t think that these several Denomi-
 “ nations of Ministers, could probably, during their
 “ Conscientious different Sentiments of Church Govern-
 “ ment, Rule the Church of GOD together to God’s
 “ Glory, and the Edification of Souls. And many other
 “ Brethren declared ’emselves to be in the same Sentiments with Mr. Mcc.Bride in this Point.



REASONS



REASONS

OF the *Dissent* and *Protesta-*

tion of the underwritten Presbyterian *Ministers* and *Elders*, against *Three* Resolutions of the General Synod at *Dungannon*, *June* the 26th 1724. which are as follows,

- I. " **T**HEN the Question was offer'd, whether we think it our Duty, for the Glory of God, the Edification of this Church and Mr. *Nevin's* own Vindication to **R**EQUIRE, that Mr. *Nevin* in the present Circumstances should make a Declaration of his Belief of the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ? Then, another State of the Question was offer'd, whether the 5th Article contains Relevant Ground of Process, or not? And then it was moved, that the previous Question be put, which of these two Questions shall be put? And the previous Question being put, it carried that the first Question shall be put.
- II. " And the first Question was put, (*viz.*) whether we think it our Duty, for the Glory of God, the Edification of this Church

“ and Mr. *Nevin*’s own Vindication to require Mr. *Nevin* to make a Declaration of his Belief of the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it carried in the Affirmative, by a Great Majority.

III. “ After Reasoning a Question was offer’d; “ seeing Mr. *Nevin* has refused to make a Declaration of his Belief of the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ when demanded by this Synod, whether we of this Synod shall have any farther Ministerial Communion with him the said Mr. *Nevin*, “ and proceed any further in his Tryal or “ not? And the Question being put, it carried, N O T, by a Great Majority.

IT is matter of sensible concern to us, to perceive the unnatural Divisions, which for some Years by-past have been so Prejudicial to the Great Interest of practical Religion, and the valuable Cause of Non-conformity amongst the Presbyterians in the North of *Ireland*, encreas’d by the conduct of this Synod, who have rais’d a new Controversie, never brought upon the Stage until now, in any of our Ecclesiastical Assemblies that we know of. And, as it has been too common in all Ages of the Church, that gross Misrepresentations and Calumnies, have been the unhappy Concomitants and Consequences of a prevalent Spirit of Division, the Churches of our Persuasion belonging to this Synodical Association, have felt the dismal Effects of them. To prevent therefore, as far as possible, any such Misrepresentation of our Conduct with respect to the Grounds, occasion, and Reasons of this our Dissent and Protestation; We beg leave to put the Reverend Synod

Synod in mind, that of the Six Articles Exhibited before them against Mr. *Nevin*, the first Three were declared not cognizable by the Synod, and were therefore refer'd to the Presbytery of *Down*; and that there was a perfect Unity in Judgment amongst all the Members of the Synod, about their being a Sufficient Foundation for an enquiry into the Truth of the Facts alleged against him; and that we in particular did Express as much Forwardness and Zeal, as any Members of the Synod against the opinion alleged to have been vented by Mr. *Nevin* in his Conversation at *Monyrea*; we were so far from undertaking the Defence of that opinion, that we look upon it highly Injurious to the Honour of Our Redeemer, and the Credit of our Profession, that the Synod have expressly resolved, that they will make no farther enquiry into it, which is one of the Reasons of our Protestation, and therefore we leave it to the Judgment of all Impartial Men, whether there be the least Foundation for Reproaching us, as if we had abetted Mr. *Nevin* in any thing that derogates from the Honour of Our Blessed Redeemer. And we desire that it may be observed, that in the Points not Try'd by the Synod, we reserve to ourselves a Right of forming an Impartial Judgment, and we shall be Determin'd by Evidence, either in Acquitting him or finding him Guilty. And that our Protestation is wholly against the Three Resolutions already Recited; which appear to us so directly contrary to Christian Discipline, the Rights of mankind, our Liberties as Christians, Protestants, and Presbyterians, as to oblige us to adhere to the Protestation we made against them, for which we humbly offer the following Reasons.

REASON

REASON. I.

WHEREAS the fifth Observation of the Committee as a *Ground of Offence* contain'd in Mr. *Nevin's* printed Letter is in these words, " We beg leave to Observe, that tho' he owns, page the 10th, he made a Confession of our Savior's Deity, before the General Synod 1721. yet he says, *that* for his part he is sorry that ever he gave way to it, and shall for the future take care, that no Temptation whatsoever shall make him venture so far again.

WE are of Opinion, that the Question which properly lay before the Synod upon the said Observation, was this, *whether it contain'd Just Matter of Complaint and Accusation against Mr. Nevin, or not?* In all cases of a like Nature upon a charge before any of our Ecclesiastical Assemblies, the first Question is, *whether it be relevant or not*, that is, whether supposing the fact to be true, it amounts to such an Offence as is Censurable by the Assembly? And the Reason is plain, because it is unbecoming the Wisdom and Gravity of such a Society to spend time in examining Evidence concerning a Matter, which if it were Prov'd, is not lyable to Censure: But especially, when a plea *against* the relevancy is made by the *Defendent*, Judgment upon it cannot be denied without manifest injustice; for that is to conceal the very Rule which he is to be Judged (which always ought to be declared with the greatest openness)

Y

and

and for the Judges to reserve it in their own Power to make the Fact Criminal or not till they see whether or no it can be prov'd a conduct not to be Vindicated from the grossest Partiality! Can it ever be doubted but that all Persons who under any Forms of Judicature receive an Accusation are oblig'd to give Judgment whether it should be quash'd, if the accused pleads that it does not amount to a Transgression of any Law? Or may they with any colour of Equity proceed to other Questions and to other Methods whereby to make a Man an Offender, when they cannot say, at least decline to say, even tho' Judgment is demanded, that the Fact whereof he is Accused is an Offence? When an Accusation is brought against any Person, the Judges ought to have nothing in their view, but to decide it Impartially, that is, *whether it be a Crime or not?* that be Disputable; and if it be a Crime, *whether he is Guilty or not?* if any other Question arises, it may be considered after the Tryal Issued: But to put other Questions which may affect the Accused in his cause, before the Relevancy and the Truth of the Accusation are Determined, which are the only Points where in he can be supposed to have prepared his Defence, and especially when the Determination of these Points is Neglected nay Refused; to divert into other Questions and make Demands whereby he may be led into a new Offence is we think unjust, and in a particular Manner contrary to that Integrity and Impartiality which ought to appear in all the proceedings of Ecclesiastical Assemblies.

THE Reverend Synod seem'd at first resolved to observe the common Rules of Discipline ; for when the Committee who drew up the Charge against Mr. *Nevin* made their Report, in the Minute which approves their Diligence, it is said, but the Synod do's not declare these Articles to be Relevant till Mr. *Nevin* be called to be heard upon them": by which Mr. *Nevin* was given to understand, that according to the ordinary course the Relevancy of each Article was to be considered, at least if he insisted upon it ; and the Synod pursued this Method with respect to the *Three first* Articles ; and when Mr. *Nevin* had Demanded that they shou'd put the Question about the Relevancy of the *Fourth* ; the Synod having refus'd it, and voted that another Question should be put instead of it, involv'd themselves in Confusion, and were obliged next Session to resume their Vote, and drop the whole Article for this Reason as themselves express it in their Minutes, " because the Deciding the Truth or Falshood of the Proposition refer'd to in the Question, wou'd lead us into a Controversie concerning the extent of the Magistrates Power, which is not proper for this Synod to Determine." The Synod, seeing they Judg'd it improper for them to Determine that Controversie, cou'd not but Judge that an Article which led to the Decision of it, was not a Relevant ground of Process : For if it had been a Relevant ground of Process, it had been a great Fault in the Synod to drop it ; but the Synod very justly Judg'd it improper for their Cognizance and Decision ; and therefore, in other Words, they Judg'd that Article not to be Relevant. Now, it was as reasonable to Judge of the relevancy

vancy of the *Fifth* Article, as of the *Four* preceeding Ones; and there were some special Reasons why they ought not by any means to have refused it: For *that* Article in the most obvious Sense of it, charges Mr. *Nevin* with Heterodoxy in the Doctrine of the Divinity of Our Blessed Lord, as if he had altered his opinion with respect to the matter of the Declaration made by him upon that Point in the Synod, 1721. Mr. *Nevin*, in his Written Defence, looks upon the Article taken in this Sense to be False, and highly Injurious to his Reputation: The Committee who drew up the Charge against him, denied that the said Fifth Article was intended to charge them in that Sense; and therefore the Synod ought not to have suffered a Charge to remain in their Records against any of their Brethren which carry'd in the most obvious Sense of it a Scandalous Imputation, not so much as pretended to be designed by those who drew the Article, but nothing of this kind appears upon Record for Mr. *Nevin's* Vindication, and for the Vindication of the Synod themselves; but Posterity as well as the present Generation, are led to a mistake, as if the Synod had charg'd Mr. *Nevin* with Heterodoxy in that important Article. The proper Remedy had been to have fixed the True sense of the Article, to have altered the Terms which conveyed an Uncharitable and Calumnious Sense, not pretended by the Committee, and then to have Judged if there were any just Sense in which it was capable of being so exprest as to be a sufficient or relevant Ground of Process. Had the Synod done this they must have Discovered the Uncharitable and Unreasonable conduct of the Committee, in the

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Joyning together two Sentences, which lye in two distinct Paragraphs of Mr. *Nevin's* printed Letter, at the distance of *Twenty Lines*, as if they had made up one intire Sentence, which Native-ly leads People to Judge him unsound in the Faith ; they wou'd have given a Seasonable check to such Contentious and Uncharitable processes, aggravated by such unfair Dealing, as must strike at the Character of the most Pious and Orthodox Divines in the World, if their Writings are to be Treated after that manner : And this was the more necessary, because when the Synod pass'd the Vote, *approving of the Diligence of the Committee*, when they presented the Draught of their Articles, the meaning was no more than this, that the Committee had omitted nothing which any One so far as they knew, had taken Offence at in Mr. *Nevin's* Letter ; but it cou'd not be understood, as if all their Articles and the Words in which they were exprest, had been approv'd by the Synod ; for before that Vote was past, many exprest their Dissatisfaction with the Conduct of the Committee, thought the Articles not well exprest'd, and look'd on some of them not to be relevant, and therefore did not Vote for the Approbation of the diligence of the Committee, but only for the Approbation of the Minute, wherein they had obtain'd an Order for the consideration of the relevancy of them afterwards ; referring what they had to say, upon that Head to its proper Place ; where the Synod wou'd have had an Opportunity of Discountenancing such unfair Management, and of censuring the Committee for it ; which was lost by the Synod's refusing to Judge of the relevancy of that Article. Besides, the Synod
cou'd

cou'd have fixt on no other possible Sense of this Article, as founded on Mr. *Nevin's* Letter, but this, *viz.* Mr. *Nevin* maintains for a Religious Principle, that when a Minister is to be Try'd for Heterodoxy, were it even in the important Article of our Saviour's Deity, where there is no Evidence against him, he ought to be acquitted without being oblig'd to Purge himself of the Error charg'd upon him; and that if he himself were so charg'd and urg'd by an *Inquisitory Method* to Purge himself, he wou'd not do it *in these Circumstances*; because he wou'd not betray the Rights of Ministers and Christians, nor give up the Divine Instituted Rules of Christian Discipline, nor the essential Rights of Natural Equity: With what Face a Presbyterian Synod cou'd have condemn'd this Principle, we are utterly at a Loss to know: And yet it's certain there is *no Shadow* or Colour from Mr. *Nevin's* Letter, to fix *any other* meaning upon the Fifth Article but *this only*; which if it had been fairly Debated and justly Decided, must have been Judg'd not relevant; and by this means all the injustice done to Mr. *Nevin*, and all the Scandal that has followed upon the fatal Issue of this Affair before the Synod wou'd have been happily prevented. With a view to the Decision of the relevancy, Mr. *Nevin* made his Defence, and Demanded that the relevancy of the Fifth Article, shou'd be Decided, but instead of this (having found no handle against him on any of the former Articles, *Three* of which the Synod unanimously Resolved were not cognizable by them, and the *Fourth* they drop'd) a Question was proposed, and a Majority carried the Vote for putting it, to make a Demand whereby Mr. *Nevin* should be

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be made guilty, if the Synod could not find him so by Evidence. Now it is apparent to us that the condition of an Accus'd Person is not to be rendered Worse or more Obnoxious by any new demand of his Judges upon his Tryal ; and that the Point before them, is, *whether he is guilty of the Offence wherewith he is Charged ? Not, whether he may be made guilty by Transgressing a posterior Act ?* much less should the Latter wholly Justle out the Former.

REASON. II.

THE *Second* and *Third* Resolutions above Recited, especially when compar'd together, appear to us contrary to Justice, and to the plain express Rules of Christian Discipline prescrib'd in Scripture.

To state our Argument and the main difference between the Reverend Synod and us upon this Head, very clearly, It must be observed that by the *Fifth* Observation of the Committee already refer'd to, Mr. *Nevin* is Accused as having repented of a Declaration he had made at the General Synod in 1721. concerning the Supreme Deity of Christ (which the Minutes of that Synod say was made by the Non-subscribers *in the Strongest Terms*) and with saying in the printed Letter p. 10. *that no Temptation whatsoever shall make him Venture so far again* : The meaning of which Charge, if it has any Determinate meaning, must be that Mr. *Nevin* is Unsound in the Article of Christ's Deity, having altered his Sentiments since *June*

1721.

1721. for that he Repented of the Declaration which he then made; or, that it was a Ground of Offence for Mr. *Nevin* to declare himself, as he does in the foresaid 10th p. of his printed Letter, against submitting to Inquisitory Methods for Issuing Scandal.

UPON the former of these Suppositions the Proceedings of the Synod against which we have Protested, appear to us to be *directly* and *strictly Inquisitory*, That is, that a Person Accused is required by Authority and under a Penalty to acquit or Condemn himself in Judgment by his own Testimony,

By the Second Resolution it is declar'd to be the Synod's Duty to require Mr. *Nevin* to make a Declaration of the Supreme Deity of Christ; accordingly an Authoritative demand was made of him to that purpose by the Moderator in Name of the Synod; And by the Third Resolution, the PENALTY of EXCLUSION from *Ministerial Communion* is inflicted for Non-compliance.

BUT whereas the Committee in their Debates before the Synod, Rejected the first as the most Odious, tho' it was the plainest Sense of their own Observation, supposing the Second already Mentioned to have been really intended (*viz.*) That it was a Ground of Offence for Mr. *Nevin* to declare himself in his printed Letter against Inquisitory Methods for Issuing Scandal, that does not hinder but that an Inquisition was held upon him with respect to the Doctrine of Christ's Supreme Deity, his Belief of which, he was required to Profess in order to Issue the Charge against him then depending; And this was the more Unreasonable because it was

to practise the Inquisitory Method against his avow'd Principle. If they intended only to Censure him for that Principle, they ought to have put the Question upon it fairly; but what cou'd be more invidious than to introduce their Censure of him and Condemnation of his Principle, in such a way as by Requiring him to Act in Contradiction to it, which they knew he cou'd not do, to give a Handle for popular Jealousies as if he were Unsound in the Article of Christ's Deity, with which at the same time the Committee themselves had expressly denyed any Intention to Charge him, by disclaiming as is already observed the first odious Sense of their own Observation?

If it be alledg'd, that the *Synod* Charitably designed to Vindicate Mr. *Nevin* from any Imputation of Heterodoxy in the Point of our Saviour's God-head (under which he had unhappily fallen) by requiring him to profess that Article which they thought he should do in such Circumstances, we cannot but observe that the means for that End was very odly Chosen, viz. By requiring him to Act against a Principle which he openly profess'd in their Presence; but indeed it is too plain that what they intended to require, was not a satisfying Evidence of his Orthodoxy in the Article of Christ's Deity, that so they might Vindicate him, but Submission to their own Inquisitory Power [and in the way that should render him Odious if he refused]; for when several Testimonys were offer'd concerning full and unforced Declarations lately made by him on that Head, when there were no Demands nor any pretence of Authority requiring them, which were there-
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fore so much the more to be Regarded; because they were freely made and without any suspicion of being Extorted by Authority or Threatnings, these Testimonies the Synod would not Regard, and some of them they would not so much as Hear; by which it is apparent that according to their Resolution, his Vindication from the Offence Charged upon him, or his being Convicted *must depend wholly on his own Testimony.*

WE think ourselves oblig'd here to Mention the Testimonies which were Offered in behalf of Mr. *Nevin*. The Reverend Mr. *Joseph Boyse* in a Letter to Mr. *Abernethy*, wrote while the Synod was Sitting, affirms, that Mr. *Nevin* had very lately Preach'd a Sermon in his (Mr. *Boyse's*) Pulpit and hearing; wherein, the said Mr. *Nevin*, did by solid Arguments prove the Orthodox Doctrine concerning the Supreme Deity of Christ; and refuted the *Arian* Scheme to his great Satisfaction. The Synod were inform'd of this Letter. Mr. *Boyse* is well known to Protestants of all Denominations to be one of the most Judicious, Learned and eminently Pious Non-Conformist Ministers in the Kingdom, wherein he has done great and Signal Services to the Church of Christ by his Faithful and Fruitful Labours, in the Work of the Ministry above Forty Years, And distinguished himself by his useful and elaborate Writings, and by his particular skill in the Controversie, which he gives his Testimony in Favor of Mr. *Nevin*, as will be sufficient to establish the Credit of his Testimony with all Impartial Judges.

MR. *Haliday* assur'd the Synod, that he had seen an Original Letter under Mr. *Nevin's* own Hand, dated since the *Affidavit* which gave Birth to the present Process against him; wherein he, the said Mr. *Nevin*, declared, that in his private Sentiments he assented to the Doctrine of our Saviour's Deity, in the very words in which that Doctrine is express'd in the *Westminster-Confession* of Faith. Mr. *Haliday* farther offer'd to Produce another Evidence who had seen the same Letter; but the other Evidence was not call'd upon; none seeming to doubt of the Truth of what he said; One of us, who Subscribe this Paper, is the Evidence he referr'd to, and can safely, if necessary, Confirm upon Oath what Mr. *Haliday* said upon that Head.

THE Reverend Mr. *Samuel Henry* of *Sligo* (upon whose Motion this Affair was brought before the Synod) did Mr. *Nevin* the Justice, to own, in open Synod, that by Conversing with Mr. *Nevin* in Private, while he was Attending on him for a Copy of his Answer to the Committee's Articles, he had received full Satisfaction of his being as Orthodox in the Point of our Saviour's Deity as any in the Synod, and was Confirm'd in this Opinion by Mr. *Nevin's* Telling him, that he could Appeal to his own People, to many Ministers in this Synod who had heard him Preach upon that Subject, and had often Convers'd with him freely upon it, and particularly to Mr. *Boyse*, who had heard him lately on that Head in *Dublin*; and therefore Declar'd, that he was Convinc'd, that the ONLY REASON that Hindred Mr. *Nevin* from complying with the Synod's Demand, was, a

Conscientious Scruple he had, about Submitting to what seem'd to him an Inquisitory Method of Issuing Scandal.

MR *Nevin* himself, in his Defence before the Synod, both by Word and Writing, calls *Arianism* an Error, asserts the ESSENTIAL DEITY of Christ, and when he told the Synod his Conscientious Scruples against Complying with their Demand of a Declaration in *his present* Circumstances, he not only Mentions the same Reasons he had given to Mr. *Henry* in private Conversation, but immediately Subjoyns to it these very Words (as appears by the Minutes of the Synod, in which his words are Recorded) "But I hope this Reverend Synod will still Remember, that I Profess'd this was NOT FROM ANY DISBELIEF of that Doctrine of the Supreme Deity of Christ.

THE Reverend Mr. *Samuel Shannon* of *Porter's ferry* stood up in his place, and offered to give Testimony for Mr. *Nevin's* Orthodoxy, but cou'd not be Heard, tho' he Frequently ask'd leave to Speak. Having inform'd ourselves carefully of what he design'd to have said, we can with good Grounds assure the Reverend Synod, that the substance of it was to this Purpose; that Mr. *Shannon* from Personal knowledge of Mr. *Nevin*, from frequent Conversation with him, and from hearing him Preach frequently upon Subjects which led him to Speak of the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, had observed Mr. *Nevin* express himself so fully upon it and so much to his Satisfaction, that unless he should Uncharitably and Wickedly suppose him to be the vilest Prevaricator, he could

not but believe him to be Sound and Orthodox in that Important Article of the Christian Faith, and that he neither maintain'd the *Arian* nor any other Heterodox Principle about it. Mr. *Shannon's* Character, for his Understanding, Integrity, Candor and Modesty, together with his great usefulness and experienc'd Abilities in the Work of the Ministry, is so well known, that all Impartial Men must give Credit to what he says.

THESE Testimonies, especially when compar'd together, We think, might have been Satisfying to the Synod, if they had meant no more than to have Sufficient Proof of his Orthodoxy, but it is too Apparent, they were resolv'd to be Satisfied in no other than the Inquisitory way

Now We conceive that Inquisitory Proceedings are contrary to the plainest and most essential Rules of Natural Equity, and a Violation of the common important Rights of Men and Christians.

It has been hitherto taken for granted by the Wisest and Best of Men, that no Man is oblig'd to Accuse or to Convict himself of any Crime by his own Testimony; that the proceedings of Human Judicature ought to be according to Evidence; and the Testimony of the accused themselves, ought not to be Accounted Evidence; that it is not to be look'd upon as Satisfying, because Men in such Circumstances are laid under the strongest Temptations to Prevaricate; And if any Crimes are so Secret as that they cannot otherwise be Prov'd than by the Confession of the Accused; they are not under the Cognizance of Human

man Authority ; but the Providence of God, has reserved them to be Judged at his own Tribunal, where and where only the Consciences of Men are to be Witnesses against them:

As it is upon the Foot of these Principles and the Security arising from them, that Men are supposed to have Associated themselves, so whenever the contrary, that is, Inquisitory Methods are used by any Judicatory, the Rights of Men and the Rules of Justice are violated. The practise of demanding Confessions under a Penalty, whereby Men are rendered obnoxious to Punishment, has obtained in some *Popish* Countries by the name of the *INQUISITION*, but is universally condemned by Protestants : and something too like it was used in *Britain* in some late Reigns, that is, requiring the accused *ex officio*, to purge or convict themselves of alledg'd Crimes, by which the sufferings of the *PROTESTANT DISSENTERS* were very grievous ; as will appear from another Part of this Reason.

WE can imagin but *TWO* objections against such Proceedings in other Places of the World and in former Times, being *Parallel* to these against which we Argue. The *FIRST* is, that the Crimes concerning which the enquiry is, or has been made are not real but Falsely so called ; that Men have been commanded to confess Errors as Truths, and real important Truths as Errors, for which they were to be punish'd as in the Case of the *POPISH INQUISITION* ; whereas the *Synod's* enquiry was concerning a Real important Truth of the Gospel and that if the contrary Error were profess'd, it is a Real and Dangerous one, which deserves the severest Church censure. We answer *FIRST*, that the

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true Argument against all Inquisitions is taken from the Principle of *natural Equity* already laid down, that no Man is oblig'd to condemn himself by his own Testimony ; which, if it be true, must hold universally in all Places, and in all Cases of Real as well as pretended Guilt. 2. It is not true in Fact, that the *Popish Inquisitions* always put Good for Evil, and Error for Truth; for *very often* they proceed against Men for alledged Immorality, and against the *Jews* for denying Jesus to be the Messiah : but we hope, No *PROTESTANTS* now will justify such proceedings against the greatest Criminals or Infidels, *viz.* not by Evidence but by Confessions extorted from them in Order to punishment. *Thirdly*, If the Principle be once established, that such Inquisition in itself be lawful and just, The *INQUISITORS* must be allowed to Judge for themselves what are real Crimes and Errors ; and then it is Easie to Judge, what advantage Error will gain by this Principle ; and what a Train of Mischiefs must overspread and be perpetuated in the World, called Christian, directly contrary to the whole Tenor and Genius of the Gospel.

The 2 Objection against the Parallel is, that in *Popish* Countries the Penalties by which Confessions are extorted are extremely severe. To which we answer, that if it be unrighteous to Extort Confessions by great Penalties, the Application of lesser Penalties for the same purpose can never be vindicated ; nay, if once it be allowed that it is just to oblige Men by punishments when accused to make Confessions, it will necessarily follow, that those punishments may be inflicted which only are Effectual to obtain the end, and so the *lesser* being Ineffectual, the *greatest* which

which Men *can use* may be justified. If it be al-
 ledged, as it was in the Debates of the Synod,
 that the practise of Our Saviour justifies Submis-
 sion to an enquiry concerning Religious Truths
 even when punishment may be expected to ensue;
 for he Witnessed a good Confession before *Pontius*
Pilate, tho' he knew he was to suffer for it:
 Certainly no practise of his can be Construed a
 betraying the Rights of mankind and the Rules
 and Principles of Justice, nor ought any Submissi-
 on he made to be counted unlawful: Nay, if he
 made a Confession before such a Judge, and when
 required under such a Penalty, much more
 ought his Disciples to confess his Truths before
 an Assembly of their Fellow Christians, being
 secure that grievous punishments are not to be in-
 flicted!

To this we answer, *FIRST*, That Our Blessed
 Lord when accused particularly before an *Eccle-*
siastical Tribunal, insisted on the Rights of man-
 kind and the Rules of Justice, Demanding that
 he shou'd be fairly Try'd according to Evidence,
 that is, the Testimony of Witnesses; and that he
 shou'd not be required upon an Accusation to de-
 clare his Doctrine out of his own Mouth, *John*
the 18th. 19, 20, 21. The High-Priest then asked
Jesus of his Disciples and of his Doctrine. Jesus an-
swered him, I spoke openly to the World, I ever
Taught in the Synagogue and in the Temple, whither
the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.
Why askest thou me, ask them that heard me what I
have said unto them: behold they know what I said.
 which Words ought to direct his Servants at
 all Times how to proceed when Teachers are ac-
 cused; for they evidently show his Judgment that
 the just way of proceeding upon an Accusation

is not to ask the Accused Persons themselves of their Doctrine, but those who have heard them.

2dly, Our Lord's making a Confession before Pilate, owning himself to be King and explaining the Nature of his Kingdom, does not import an acknowledgment of the Judge's right to make the Demand: Or, that he Thought himself obliged to submit to such Exercise of Authority, else there is no Arbitrary and Tyrannical Exercise of Power, but what ought to be submitted to, after his Example; it being impossible to State a Case wherein more Horrid injustice and Cruelty can be used than what was actually practised against Our Blessed Saviour. We must therefore otherwise Account for his making the Confession, than that he thought himself oblig'd to submit to the Authority of the Judge Unjustly Requiring it: And the Case was plainly this; he did it *in Obedience to the will* of his Father, that Peculiar Commandment which determin'd him to lay down his precious Life (which yet was taken away by the wicked Hands of Men) and to all the preparatory steps, which Providence had appointed, and the Scriptures foretold for compleating that Bloody Tragedy; to go up to *Jerusalem* where he knew he must Suffer, to yield without Resistance to the Violence of his Enemies, and among the rest, freely to make a Confession whereby he was Condemned, which was most Wickedly required of him. No one surely, will say that this practice of Christ, founded on *these peculiar* Reasons, is a precedent for his Followers; and seeing it cannot be Supposed without Absurdity that in making this Confession before Pilate
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he Acted from any Degree of Obligation laid upon him by the Human Authority requiring it, Else (as we have shewed) the precedent will bind Christians to Submit to the most barbarous *Inquisitions* which can be devised; it's Evident, that no Manner of Obligation is Laid upon any Disciple of Christ to submit to the Demands of Human Authority by that Example.

3dly, The Question is not how far Christians may be oblig'd to make Confessions in any Case but how far Judges may Demand them from the accused; in other Words, keeping in view the practice of our Lord refer'd to in the Objection, the Question is not, *whether the Conduct of Christ be a good pattern for Mr. Nevin?* But *whether the Conduct of Pilate and the Jews be a good Example for the Synod?* For the true Debate between the **SYNOD** and the **PROTESTERS**, is, whether it was Just and Reasonable to make such an Authoritative demand as was made on Mr. Nevin, and to inflict Punishment for Non-compliance? If there be therefore any Example which can Justify the Synod, it must be the Example of Judges. If Christians may find themselves oblig'd by their Zeal for the Truths of Christ even voluntarily to profess them with the greatest hazard of their Lives, as many of the primitive Confessors and Martyrs did, it does not follow that any have a Right under the form of Judicature to require Confessions in order to Punishments, particularly that some Christians have a right to deal so by others.

THE Second branch of the Argument, is that the proceedings of the Reverend Synod against which We have Protested, appear to be

contrary

contrary to the Express Rules of Christian Discipline prescribed in Scripture. The Blessed Author of our Religion and Founder of the Church, foresaw that *Offences wou'd come*, and therefore he has Thought fit to be very Particular in defining them, and Directing his Servants how they shou'd carry it towards Offenders. Now We find by the Gospel, that as Christians are bound to *avoid the Disorderly and Hereticks*, so they ought not rashly to Judge one another; the great Law of Charity forbids us to Entertain ill impressions Concerning our Brethren, till some Matter of Offence appear against them by Evidence: And particularly in the Case of ELDERS, it is Expressly provided, that an *Accusation shou'd not be Received against them; but before two or three Witnesses*, 1 Timothy 5. 17. This we take to be a *standing Rule* to the Christian Church and to Ecclesiastical Assemblies in all Ages; but by it no Elder is to be held Convicted of any Offence, nor to be Obnoxious to any degree of Punishment or Church Censure, otherwise than by the Testimony of Witnesses. And as the Wisdom of God foresaw, that the Characters of Ministers wou'd be particularly liable to Groundless Reflections, which if they were too Rashly Received in the Church wou'd be attended with very bad Consequences, marring the Success of the Ministry and the Edification of Christians; no particular Caution is required in proceeding against Men in that Station: For how much the more Important their reputation is to the Interest of Religion, so much the more dangerous it is to use Rash and unjustifiable Methods which may have a tendency to stain it and to hinder their usefulness.

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By the Excellent Rule already Mention'd, and the plain and Just Reasons on which it is Founded, it is apparent to us that Christians ought to rest satisfied Concerning the Innocence of their Brethren, against whom Scandal cannot be fairly Prov'd; so far at Least as not to Exclude them from Communion, or any priviledge which otherwise by the Laws of the Gospel they are Intituled to. If any have secret Errors or Wickedness, which if they were fully discovered, wou'd disqualifie them for any kind of Religious Communion, yet we cannot Judge them; and we must Conclude, it is the will of Christ we shou'd Live in Communion with them, unless they can be proved Guilty by Witnesses; since he has Com-
fin'd us to *that Method* of detecting Scandal and Convicting Offenders, and expressly *Prohibited any other*; and no pretence of Zeal for purging the Church, by casting out the Erroneous or Immoral, will Justifie us in Violating his Laws.

WE Cannot but Conclude, it is the Intention of Divine Providence that wicked and Erroneous Persons shou'd be permitted to Live in the Visible Society of sincere and sound Christians, unless their Evil deeds and open Erroneous Professions discover them, for as our Saviour teaches us, (*Mat. 13. 40.*) That the great distinction is to be made at the day of Judgment, so it is apparent, from his Excellent Parable there Expounded, that no Endeavours are to be used by his Servants, for *plucking the Tares* which may at the same time endanger the *Rooting up of the Wheat* with them. And it is therefore a misguided Zeal to disturb the

settled order and Peace of Christ's Church by using Methods for discovering Offenders which he has not warranted.

OUR Blessed Saviour Suffered in his own Society, and in the high Station and Character of an Apostle, one who had form'd the most wicked Treason in his Heart, and whom he called a DEVIL; and tho' for the Instruction of his Faithful Disciples, he thought fit to Intimate that one among them was secretly guilty, yet the Innocent were *never put on purging themselves*, nor the Criminal on *convicting himself* by his own Testimony; he was permitted to Enjoy the priviledges of Communion and even his Important Office, until he forfeited it by his compleated notorious Transgression; it is true, there were some things Extraordinary founded on peculiar Reasons, and not to be drawn into precedent in our Saviour's conduct towards *Judas*, but as to the Particular now under Consideration, from his Example, there was a plain Intimation given to the Disciples, and all the Churches, that the Ministry and the Communion of the Church, are not polluted by the secret wickedness of Ministers or professed Christians. And that it is a *preposterous Zeal* for Men to use *uncommanded Methods*, in order to oblige their fellow Christians to discover their Crimes and Errors.

IN our reasonings on this Subject, we have the Satisfaction to agree with a late Reverend Minister of our own Communion (Mr. John McC. Bride) justly esteem'd among us for Learning, Charity, and other valuable Qualifications, who in a Paper Entituled, *The Vindication of Marriage as solemnized by Presbyterians in the North of Ireland*,

land, largely argues against the Oath *ex Officio*, and *ALL SUCH* Inquisitory Methods of Proceeding in Judgment. We shall insert some of his Arguments and Authentic Testimonies he has Collected, to prove that these Methods are contrary to Scripture, Reason, and the declared Sense of the Legislature of these Kingdoms.

H E says, p. 44, 45, 46, 47. in Answer to this Libel, it wou'd be considered, " *First*, that we
 " are obliged to answer such Questions or Ar-
 " ticles as are made, and that by a Corporal
 " Oath *ex Officio*, which we Judge contrary
 " to the Laws of God, Light of Nature, and
 " the standing Laws of *England*, which will ap-
 " pear from the Nature of the Oath *ex Officio*,
 " which hath been Justly condemn'd, both by
 " Lawyers and Ministers in *England*; a *THOU-*
 " *SAND* of the *LATTER* Petition'd King
 " *JAMES* Anno 1603. for the removal of it, be-
 " cause hereby Men are forced to accuse them-
 " selves which is first against the Law of God—
 " Nor wou'd Our Lord and Saviour accuse him-
 " self when Questioned by his unjust Judges,
 " *Matt.* 27. 11, 12, &c. and therefore answered
 " not a word, nor did they Administer the
 " Oath *ex Officio* to him, nay *John* 18. 20, 21.
 " he demanded, *why askest thou me? ask them*
 " *which heard me what I have said.*

" The Prophet *Jeremiah* would not answer the
 " King to the hazard of his Life, till he gave
 " him sufficient Security, *Jer.* 38. 14, 15, 16.
 " Christ would not proceed against the Woman
 " taken in Adultery without her Accusers, *John*
 " 8. 10. its expressly forbidden to receive an accu-
 " sation against an Elder, but before two or three wit-
 " nesses, *1 Tim.* 5. 19. The Gravity of an El-

der's Person, and the weight of his Office
thou'd defend him from being Defam'd public-
ly, as bringing into a Court is, if there be
not great cause for it.
2dly, as the Law of God allowed none to be
condemned under two or three Witnesses, Num.
35. 30. Deut. 17. 6. Mat. 18. 16. So it's Di-
rectly contrary to the Supreme Law of Na-
ture, obliging mankind to self-preservation;
wherefore a Malefactor Justly condemned to
Death, ought not to be his own Execution-
ner: It's a Maxim, *Nemo Tenetur prodere Se-*
ipsum, no Man is oblig'd to Betray himself, or,
Jurare in suam Turpitudinem, to Swear to his own
Disgrace, and this is agreeable to the Word
of God, Prov. 25. 9. *Discover not a Secret to*
another. If we are not oblig'd to Reveal our
Neighbours Secrets, much less our own. *Se-*
cretum prodere noli, is an old and Just Rule;
Grot: on Math. 27. 14. in Vindication of
Christ's refusing to accuse himself saith, *Et pro-*
fecto in criminum causis, non modo tacentes nisi
Convicti certissimis Testimoniis damnari non poss-
unt, sed nec Confessio quidem, perire volentis, ad-
mittenda est; i. e. truly in Causes Criminal, the
Silent cannot be Condemn'd, unless Convicted by
most Certain Evidence; but the Confession of
such as are willing to Perish, is not to be Admitted.
Festus declared before Agrippa that it was
not the Manner of the Romans, to deliver
any Man to Die, before that he who is accused,
have his accuser Face to Face, and have Liber-
ty to answer for himself concerning the Crime
laid against him. Trajan the Emperor, tho'
Persecutor of Christianity, in his Letter to
Plinius the 2d Writes, *sine authore certo Propo-*
siti

" *siti libelli, nulla Crimina locum habere debent,*
 " *nam et pessimi Exempli, nec Nostri seculi est, i. e.*
 " *without a Certain Author of the Libel preferred,*
 " *no Crimes ought to have place, for it is of most*
 " *Pernicious Example, and not allow'd in our Age.*
 " And it is to be Regretted that PROTES-
 " TANTS shou'd proceed AGAINST
 " PROTESTANTS, according to the
 " Method of the ROMISH INQUISI-
 " TION, whose Rules are exactly Observed in
 " proceeding against us.

' NOTHING more opposite to the Com-
 ' mon and statute Laws of England than this
 ' Oath *ex Officio* is ; its known that, its FIRST
 ' Contrivers were *Romish Inquisitors*, who invent-
 ' ed the Engine to discover and destroy the
 ' *Waldenses*, and it was brought into England
 ' in the Days of *Henry the 4th* by Popish Pro-
 ' lates, to Root out the Disciples of *Wickliffe*
 ' then call'd *Lollards*, as appears by an Act of
 ' Parliament the 2d of *Henry the 4th*, Cap: 19
 ' anno 1400. But being found of mischievous
 ' Consequence to the Subject, was in England
 ' justly Condemn'd.

' *Anno Dom. 1534.* the House of Common
 ' present a Complaint to King *Henry the 8th* of
 ' the Rigorous Proceedings in the Spiritual
 ' Courts, and especially their calling Men before
 ' them *ex Officio*, and laying Articles to their
 ' Charge without any Accuser. *Thomas Phillipps*
 ' (having been so articulated by the Bishop of
 ' *London* in a Cause of pretended Heresie, and
 ' notwithstanding his Appeal from the said
 ' Bishop to the King, being Illegally and Ex-
 ' tremely proceeded against by the said Bishop
 ' and also excommunicated) put in his Com-
 ' plain

plaint to the House of Commons, who on the 4th of February sends up the Complaint to the Lords against the said Bishop, and on the 15th of March they sent some of their Members to the said Bishop, requiring him to make Answer to the said Complaint exhibited against him; but seeing the Lords would not suffer the said Lord Bishop being a Peer, to answer or appear at the Bar of the House of Commons, they sent up to the Lords a Bill about punishing Hereticks, which passed into a Statute 25th, Henry the 8th, Cap. 14th. Declaring that it did not stand with right Order of Justice, or good Equity, that any Person should be convict, and put to Loss of Life, good Name, or Goods, upon the Suspicion or fancy of any Ecclesiastical Judge, without legal Process, and due Accusation, &c. and enacting, that henceforth the Proceeding should be by Accusation or Presentment of two Witnesses at the least &c. as in Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation, part 1. page 116, 146, 147, 170. therefore that Procedure against Philips being against the right Order of Justice and good Equity, was a nullity and void; and the Lord Cook says, that this part of that Statute was Declaratory of the ancient Law of the Land, 2 Instit: 658 & 12. Rep. 27.

THIS Oath is also Expressly against the Statute, Char. 1. Cap. 11. for taking away the high Commission Court, where there is this Clause, And be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that no Arch-Bishop, Bishop, Vicar-general, or Chancellor, &c. nor any other Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Judge, Officer, or Minister of Justice, &c. shall ex Officio, or at the Instance or Promotion of any other Person whatsoever, urge, or force, tender, give, or minister

ster unto any Church-Warden, Sides-man, or other Person whatsoever, any Corporal Oath, whereby or she shall or may be charged or obliged, to make any Presentment of any Crime or Offence, or to accuse himself or herself of any Crime or Offence Delinquency or Misdemeanor, or any Neglect, Matter or thing whereby, or by Reason whereof, he or she shall or may be lyable, or exposed to any Censure, Penalty or Punishment whatsoever, upon Pain of Penalty that every Person that shall offend contrary to this Statute, shall forfeit and pay triple Damages to every Person thereby aggrieved, and the Sum of a hundred Pounds to him, or them who shall first demand, or sue for the same; and tho' by the Statute 13. Cha. 2d. Cap. 12. part of the Statute is abrogated, yet the Clause is excepted, and confirmed by an express Clause in that Act; by the whole it may be seen, that tho' the Crime may be real, and we guilty thereof, yet the Method of proceeding against us, is illegal and unjust.

THE Ingenious Mr. DAVID CADERWOOD, one of the most Learned Scottish Presbyterian Divines of his Age, wrote his *Antitares Damascenum* in the Reign of K. James VI. (a Book in great Esteem in the Church of Scotland, and regarded by very good Judges as an unanswerable Defence of Non-Conformity) wherein he gives us a concise Account of the Sufferings of the Non-Conformists by the Oath *ex Officio*, and of the Iniquity of that Imposition. We beg Leave to insert here a Translation of some part of what he has wrote on that Head, and shall place the Original at the foot of the Page. That Reverend Author, treating of the Regal Supremacy, and the Power of the Ecclesiastical Com-

Commissaries commissioned by the Crown, says, p: 14, 15.) * ' The said three Commissaries are empowered to make any one who appears before them to take an Oath,---that he will give a true Answer to their Interrogatories---and that not only in Matrimonial and Testamentary, but in Criminal Causes, where Confiscation of Goods or some heavier Punishment is the Penalty, and this they do sometimes, when the guilty can be convicted by Witnesses or sure Evidence. *Trajan*, tho' an Enemy to the Christian Faith, yet writes thus to *Pliny* 2d, without a certain Author of the Libel preferred, no Crime ought to have place; for it is of most pernicious Example, and not allowed in our Age. Our Lord said to the Adulterers, Jo. 8. 10. *Woman, where are those thine Accusers?* The Law of Nature teacheth, that no Man is obliged to betray himself. For Nature tends to its own Preservation. By the Law of *Moses*, at the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Matter was to be Established, Deuter. 19. 15. *Alexander* 2, writing to *Raynoldus* Bishop of *Cuma*, concerning

' Gui-

* Possunt Dicti tres Commissarii comparentem adigere ad testandum Juramentum---se veraciter responsurum ad ipsorum Interrogata---idque non solum in Causis Matrimonialibus Testamentariis, sed etiam in Pœnalibus, quorum pœna est bonorum publicatio, aut gravior Animadversio. Et quidem quaque, cum Testibus vel Indiciis certis reus revinci potest. *Trajanus*, etsi Christianæ fidei hostis, sic tamen rescribit *Plinio* secundo, *Sine auctore certo propositi Libelli, nulla criminum habere debent: Nam & pessimi Exempli, nec nostri Seculi.* Dixit Dominus adulteræ, Johan. 8. 10. *Mulier, ubi sunt Accusatores?* Jus naturale docet neminem teneri prodere seipsum. Nam Natura est sui ipsius Conservatrix. Lege Mosai-
ex Sermone duorum aut trium Testium statuta Res omnis.

Deut.

Guilandus a Presbyter who was charg'd with killing a Bishop, says, *If there be wanting certain Accusers, then as Justice requires, without all Controversy, let the Presbyter have for all his Damages he has unjustly sustain'd on that Score, and enjoy his Priestly Office, with all its Profits.* The second Council of Bracara decrees thus: *If any one shall accuse any Clergyman of Fornication, according to Paul's Precept, let him be oblig'd to Support it by two or three Witnesses: If he can't Prove by Witnesses what he hath said, let the same Censure of Excommunication be inflicted on the Accuser, which the Accused wou'd have incurr'd upon Conviction-----* For the very same Reason for which no Man shou'd be compell'd to produce Witnesses against himself, neither ought he to be forc'd to give Evidence against himself. The Oath *ex Officio*-----wou'd be introduc'd into the Church of England, under Henry 4th, at the Desire of the Prelates, for detecting those whom that Age thought Heretics, and particularly the Lollards; which Pope in his Monuments of the Martyrs, calls a *Sanguinary Law*. And doubtless, it is a *Law of the Dragon and Beast, not of the Lamb*. And yet the Prelates of our Day run down those who maintain the purest Discipline and Worship, and that very Law which the Papists contriv'd

Deut. 19. 15. Alexander 2. Raynoldo Episcopo Cumano Guilandro Presbytero nece Episcopi gravato, sic Scribit, *certi Accusatores defuerint, tunc dictante Justitia, sine omni controversia, Presbyter quacunq[ue] ob hac injuste amisit, et Sacrum accipiat, et integra Beneficia.* Concilium Bracarense sic statuit, *Si quis aliquem Clericorum in accusatione fornicationis impetit, secundum Præceptum Pauli, duo vel tria Testimonia requirantur ab illo. Quod si non potuerit, datis Testimoniis, pro te quod dixit, Excommunicationem Accusati Accusator accipiat.*

gainst the *Lollards* ; tho' many Lawyers plead
 that it was repeal'd 25th *Henry* 8 : And *Fuller*
 prov'd by many Arguments in the Cause of his
 Clients, that the Commissaries, by Vertue of
 their Commission cou'd not compell any Man
 to take that Oath *ex Officio*. These Grave and
 Learned Men, *Cartwright*, *Fenner*, *Snape*, and
 others were imprison'd for refusing that--Oath :
 After keeping 'em for some time in Custody,
 lest they shou'd seem to have imprison'd
 'em without a just Cause, they prosecuted
 'em in the *Star-Chamber*, by the Queen's
 Attorney General, where their Integrity was
 made appear, to a Demonstration, by the
 Witnesses who were adduc'd against them.
UDALL, a pious and learned Man, because
 he wou'd not betray himself as the Author of
 a Book entituled, *The Demonstration of the Dis-*
cipline, was cast into Prison ; where he di-
 ed". *Fuller*

Qua Ratione nemo cogitur contra se Testes producere, eadem
 ne cogendus contra se Testimonium prebere. Juramentum istud
 quod vocant *ex officio*—Introduc'tum in Ecclesiam *Anglica-*
nam sub *Henrico* 4. postulantibus Prælati, ad detegendos quos
 illa ætas hereticos censebat, ac præsertim quos *Lollardos* voca-
 bant, quam Legem Sanguinariam appellat *Foxus* in *Martyrum*
Monumentis. Et certe, est *Lex Draconis* et *Bestiæ*, non *Agni*.
 Eadem tamen Lege præfules hodierni oppugnant purioris *Disci-*
plinæ et *Cultus* Assertores, qua Pontificii *Lollardos*, quamvis *Ju-*
ris consulti complures contendunt antiquatam fuisse Anno 25.
Henrici. 8. & commissarios vi commissionis neminem cogere
 posse ad præstandum Juramentum *ex officio*, *Fullerus* in causa
 Clientum Argumentis pluribus evicit. Viri Graves et eruditi,
Cartwrightus, *Fennerus*, *Snappius*, et alii, conjecti in Carcerem,
 quod renuerant præstare istud—Juramentum. Quos, post-
 quam aliquamdiu in Carcere asservati essent, ne immerentes
 Carceris Poena castigasse viderentur, in Camera Stellata accusan-
 dos curarunt ab Advocato Reginæ, quorum tamen Integritas a
 testibus

Fuller in his Church History, Book 9th. page 197. gives an Account of Mr. Cartwright's being brought before her Majesties (Queen Elizabeth.) Commissioners, there to take his Oath, and give in his Answer to 31 Articles exhibited against him before John Almare Bp. of London, the two Lord chief Justices, Justice Gawdy, Serjeant Puckering (afterwards Lord keeper) and Attorney General Popham. The Commissioners did move him to give in his Answer, and assured him on their Credits, that by the Laws of the Realm he was to take his Oath, and to answer as he was required. But Mr. Cartwright desired to be born withal, pleading that he thought he was not bound by the Laws of God so to do. Hereupon he was sent to the rest of his Brethren to the Fleet.

These Articles are recited by *Fuller*, *ibid* : p 198, 199, 200, 201, 202.

Some of these Articles related to his Conduct beyond Seas at Antwerp, Middleburgh, &c. his being ordained in some of these Places, otherwise than the Laws of the Realm did prescribe. That he set up in some of those Places a certain consistory, seminary, Presbytery, or Eldership Ecclesiastical; some of them charged him with impugning the Laws and Government Ecclesiastical, and divers Parts of the Liturgy of the Church of England, and breaking the Orders of the Book of Common Prayer, inveighing against the Bishops and other Governors of the Church.

HIS

testibus ipsorum etiam opera productis dilucide demonstrata est. Udallus, Vir pius et doctus, Pastor Ecclesiæ ad novum Castrum, quia se Authorem Libri, qui inscribitur *Demonstratio Discipline*, prodere noluit, in Carcerem conjectus, ubi Animam——exhalavit.

HIS knowing who were the Penners, Printers, or some of the Dispersers of several Libels against the *Hierarchy*; His meeting with others in Assemblies, *General, Provincial, and Classical*. Contemning the Office of churching Women, &c.

BUT about the Oath *ex Officio*, he gives an Account of the Judgment of the Non-conformists, as follows, ' But the most general Excepti-
' on against the high Commission was this, that
' proceeding *ex Officio mero* by way of Inquiry a-
' gainst such whom they pleased to suspect, they
' tendred them an Oath which was conceived
' unjust, that in cases criminal a Party should be
' forced to discover what might be penal to him-
' self, *Book 9. Page 183. ibid & Page 184.* he
' gives the Arguments made Use of *pro* and *con*
' in different Columns; some of the Reasons a-
' gainst the Oath are as follows:

' That it was contrary to the Fundamental Law of Liberty, *nemo tenetur seipsum prodere.*

That ' Though such Proceedings *ex Officio* were practised by the Popish Prelats against the Saints and Servants of God; yet it was NEVER USED BY PROTESTANTS in their Ecclesiastical Censures.

' The Scripture which ought to be the Rule of our Actions, affords neither Precepts nor Precedent, of such Proceedings; where Witnesses, were produced and the Accusers brought Face to Face.

' *William Tindal*, a worthy Martyr, in his Comment on the *fifth* of *Matthew*, saith plainly, that a Judge ought not to compell a Man to swear against himself. NO PROTESTANT Church beyond the Seas hath made Use of such TYRANNICAL PROCEEDINGS.

' They

‘ **THEY** complained that this Oath *ex Officio*
 ‘ (like what is said of Black Witches) had on-
 ‘ ly Power to do Mischief, not to heal or help
 ‘ any.

Ibid. page 187 Fuller says, “ We take our
 ‘ leave of this Subject, when we have told the
 ‘ Reader that some Years since, one being urg’d
 ‘ by Archbishop Laud, to take the Oath *ex*
 ‘ *Officio*, refused it on this Reason, an Oath, saith
 ‘ he, *by the words of the Apostle is an end of all*
 ‘ *Strife*; whereas, saith he, *this is the beginning of*
 ‘ *Strife*, yields Matter to the Lawyers to Molest
 ‘ me. But since the High Commission and this
 ‘ Oath are taken away by Act of Parliament,
 ‘ it is to be hoped that (if such Swearing were so
 ‘ great a Grievance) *nihil Analogum*, NO
 ‘ **THING LIKE IT** (which may amount
 ‘ to as much) shall hereafter be Substituted
 ‘ in the room thereof.

‘ **FULLER** gives an account of one Thomas
 ‘ Stone Parson of Warkton, who was Examined
 ‘ by the Examiner for the Star-Chamber by ver-
 ‘ tue of an Oath tender’d him by the Queen’s
 ‘ Attourney, which he took and Answer’d to
 ‘ them as far as he cou’d; for which Fuller says
 ‘ he was generally Censur’d by those of his
 ‘ Party (meaning the Non-conformists) as well
 ‘ such as were at liberty, conceiving themselves
 ‘ to be endanger’d by his Discovery as by
 ‘ those already in Prison, complaining that he
 ‘ added Affliction to their Bonds, yea his
 ‘ embracing a different course from the rest
 ‘ cast an Aspersions on others of his side, as
 ‘ less sound in Judgment, or tender in Con-
 ‘ science because Peremptorily concealing what
 ‘ he thought fitting to Confess; many that high-

ly esteem'd him before hereafter accounted him *no precious* but a *Counterfeit Stone*, so that he found it necessary in his own Vindication to impart the Reasons of his Confession to those who condemned him, if not for a Traitor yet a Coward in the cause, Ibid Page

209

WE quote not the Authority of these great Men, as if we thought 'em Sufficient to direct our Consciences, of which we acknowledge God alone to be the Lord: But we have adduc'd 'em for two Reasons; *first*, because their Arguments against all *Inquisitory Methods* seem to us to be unanswerable, and Applicable, in their full Force, to the case in debate between the Reverend Synod and us. *Secondly*, to lay before the Synod (from vouchers, which we presume they will not Disapprove) a brief History of the impure spring, and wicked progress, of *Inquisitory Methods* set up in the Church in the room of Christian Discipline, with a design to Ruine the very best Men of the Age, of whom the *World was not Worthy*. The preceding History plainly proves, that they were a *Popish Project* to destroy that Glorious work of Reformation which *Wickliffe* (that Man of God) and his Followers, had so much at Heart; that High-Church plaid the same Game against such great Men as *Cartwright*, and the principal Heads of the *English Non-Conformists*, who were contending for a farther Reformation; and that, therefore we ought not to be sham'd as if we were introducing new opinions amongst the Dissenters, when we are only asserting and abiding by the Ancient Scriptural Principles

Principles, for which these who have been the greatest Ornaments of the Dissenting Interest have suffer'd.

If we consider the tendency of Inquisitory Methods in the Church, they seem to us as Unreasonable, as from the foregoing Instances, they appear to be Unscriptural, and Illegal, they will encourage Causeless Jealousy, by obliging Men to Gratify its Demands; they will multiply Offences and Vexatious Prosecutions; what Restraints can be laid on the most Licentious Calumny, nay, must it not be Countenanc'd and Abetted by the very forms of Judicial proceeding, if once it become an establish'd Rule, that the accused must purge themselves, altho no Evidence is brought against them; for if requiring the most Innocent Persons to purge themselves of any Offence be no Injury to them, such as boldly insist upon it against any Person before a Church Assembly, cannot be Complain'd of as doing any Wrong. Nay, if the want of Evidence for an Accusation be not a just Cause, why the accused may refuse to Purge himself, Judicatories will be obliged to treat the Causeless accusers as Innocent, and the Unjustly accused as Guilty, requiring them to bring their Characters under Suspicion and purge themselves. And thus our Assemblies will be turn'd into the Common receptacles of Reproach; and the most Malicious accusers, are Taught to spread their Scandal, under the Countenance of Ecclesiastical Authority, and be Guiltless. How Contrary would such proceedings be to that express Law of God *Deut. 19. 16---20. If a false Witness rise against any Man, to Testify against him that which is wrong, then both the Men between whom the Controversy*

trouversie is, shall stand before the Lord, before the Priests and the Judges, which shall be in those Days, and the Judges shall make diligent Inquisition: And behold if the Witness be a false Witness, & hath Testified Falsely against his Brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his Brother: So shalt thou put the Evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear and fear, & shall henceforth commit no more any such Evil among you! Can we suppose the Righteous Law of God, which hath decreed so just a Punishment against a false Witness, to give Sanctuary to a false Accuser, and to give so much Encouragement to Calumny, as to put it into the Power of every Malicious Slanderer to hold an Inquisition, at Pleasure, upon the Faithful and Inoffensive Servants of Jesus Christ! And yet the Principle against which we argue does establish such a Power, and therefore we must Conclude it to be a bad one.

BUT if the Inquisition happens to fall on a guilty Person, one of two things must necessarily be Supposed, either that he Dissembles, to conceal his Offence, and so Scandal is Issu'd by Perjury or Solemn Prevarication; rather indeed instead of Issuing it, a new Suspicion is raised; for they who have so little Charity as to believe a man Guilty without Evidence, will probably be inclin'd to suspect that in purging himself by his own Testimony he has added Dissimulation to his other Wickedness; or else it must be supposed that the Guilty Person has so much Honesty as to Confess the Truth, what will the Church gain by such a Discovery? No more than that Scandal is Given, a Stumbling Block is laid before the weak, reproach

proach is brought on the Profession of Religion, and a foundation is laid for Divisions, it may be, Sects among Christians; all these Mischievous Consequences would have been avoided, if the Sin or the Error had been suffer'd to lye Dormant; and since there's woe pronounc'd to the World *because of Offences*, and particularly to the Man by whom the Offence cometh, they surely must be accessory, who by unwarrantable Methods cause Scandal to be Declared, whereby it has its pernicious Effects. It's true, the Church is oblig'd to use means for preventing the ill tendency of Scandal, and for reclaiming Offenders, but no sober considerate Person will say, that it is therefore his Duty to divulge or cause to be divulg'd secret faults whereby they become Scandals, for that is to lay a Stumbling Block or a Temptation to Sin before the World.

IN vain wou'd it be said, that the Synod did not require Mr. *Nevin* (nor could be supposed in such Circumstances, to require any Person) to declare his own Secret Guilt, but an important Truth of the Gospel; for, certainly, what they did require (and always in such a Case upon an Accusation must be understood to require) was a Declaration of his own Innocence, that he might be acquitted; or of his Error, that he might be Condemned. A judicial inquiry necessarily imports, that a Person's Innocence or his being Guilty of the Crime whereof he is accused, is in Question, and that Sentence is to be pronounced according as the *one* or the *other* is discovered: Nothing can be more properly call'd a Testimony *for* or *against* a Person, or regarded as of greater importance in Judgment, than

than when the Decision is made to depend upon it: But the Synod made such use of, and laid such stress on Mr. *Nevin's* Declaration that by it he was to be acquitted or Condemned; so that to represent the Resolution, as if it only intended absolutely and abstractly, that he should declare the Doctrine of Christ's Deity, is grossly to Misrepresent it; for the plain Design of it was not, nor could be, any other than that he shou'd Declare his own Innocence or his own Guilt, with respect to this particular Article, in order to Absolution from Scandal or censure. Supposing a Person were accused of some heinous Immorality in Practice, and the Scandal were to be issued in the same manner as Mr. *Nevin's* was, that is, by his purging himself, tho' there was no Evidence so much as pretended against him, and he solemnly put the World to defiance to produce the least Shadow of proof; it is very likely in a Case so stated, the unrighteousness of the Inquisitory way of Proceeding wou'd be apparent to every one; at least, it wou'd not be pretended, that any Doctrine or Point of Morality were the Subject of the demanded Declaration, only the Persons Innocence or guilt. But really there is no Diversity in such a Case from that of Mr. *Nevin's*, in respect of the intent and meaning of the judicial Demand; for the design of the Question put to require a Declaration, did not at all relate to the Truth or importance of the Doctrine of Christ's Divinity, or whether it be a part of the Christian Religion, which Ministers and Christians are bound in proper Circumstances to profess: But merely to this, whether the Charge against him contain'd in the Committee's 5th Observation, should be
Issued

Issued in that manner, viz. that if he declar'd his belief of that Doctrine, that is, his own Innocence, he shou'd be acquitted ; if he declar'd the contrary, he was to be Condemn'd ; if he made no Declaration at all, the Tryal was not to be Issued, nay, as the Sequel shew'd, he was to be censur'd for his refusal. By all which it is plain, that the Method of proceeding against him was in the properest Sense Inquisitory, and therefore contrary to Gospel rules of Discipline.

I F the Synod had a Power to require of Mr. Nevin, while he stood in Judgment before them a Declaration, they must have likewise a Power to require from any Person whatsoever, who shall at any Time stand in Judgment before them a Declaration of his belief of that Truth, that is opposite to the Error for which he may be under process, tho' the error cannot be prov'd against him by the Testimony of sufficient Witnesses, and if they have really such a Power, there can be no Reason that can justify the Person's Declining to make the Declaration enjoyn'd him, but his *Dis-belief* of the Doctrine so declared ; and if no other Reason ought to be Assigned for his refusal but his *Dis-belief* of the Doctrine, then *Inquisition* wants nothing complete it : For the Inquisitors conclude very consequentially from this Principle, that he, who will not declare, Disbelieves the Doctrine he ought to profess, and holds the opposite error. The Synod must either maintain their Power requiring Declarations in General from all, who shall stand in Judgment before them, or they must show the Foundation of their Claim to such a Power over Mr. Nevin in particu-

and in his Case only ; we presume, they won't pretend to the *Latter*, and therefore they must claim a *General Power* of Authoritative demanding Declarations from all, they process for Doctrinal Errors, or none at all ; if they claim such a *General Power*, Inquisition *can rise no higher*, nor insist on more extravagant Demands : For every one that is disposed tamely to submit to this Yoke, must Suffer the Synod and all their Subordinate Assemblies, to search out all the Secrets of his Heart, by forcing Him to declare them, *as often* as they have a mind to *Rack him* by this *Inquisitory* Discipline : And if this be not an extorting of a Confession from the guilty, in order to Punishment, which is *INQUISITION* in the strictest Sense of the Term, we shall despair of ever being able to fix the guilt of Inquisition upon *any Instance* that can be assign'd. By this Reasoning it appears evidently, that the Synodical Demand in Mr. *Nevin's* Case was *truly and properly* Inquisitory, and therefore liable to all the just Objections which can be, and actually are, made against *all Inquisitions* by the best and most Sound and Learned Protestants in the World. And therefore, our Protestation against the above recited Resolutions appears to us to be a necessary Remonstrance on behalf of our Common Protestant Principle, and the Liberties of the Christian Church, all which seem to us to be consequentially struck at and affected by the Resolutions we complain of. And if this be true, our conduct, as we humbly conceive, is so far from making us justly obnoxious to the Modish Penalties of Defamation and Popular Opprobrium, under which our Sufferings have been very grievous ; that it Entitles us to the favourable

Approbation

Approbation of all, who have truly at Heart the preservation of their Christian Priviledges.

It's true, it was pretended that for the Glory of God and the Edification of those who were present and others who might be inform'd of it, the Demand of a Declaration was made, and for these Reasons Mr. *Nevin* ought to have comply'd with it; and some think it strange, that a Christian should at any Time refuse to Confess an important Truth of Religion, if in his Heart he believes it; especially, when at the same Time that he Vindicates himself from the Imputation of Error, his Fellow Christians are Edified and Christ seems to be Glorify'd, by obeying his Commandment to *Confess him before Men*: But this way of Speaking carries no Conviction to us, unless we would suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by the meer sound of Words. It's certain, that Actions which tend very much to God's Dishonour have been cover'd with a pretence of Zeal for his Glory, the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 66. v. 5. Speaks of some, who *hated their Brethren and cast them out for God's names-sake, and yet said, Let the Lord be Glorified*, that is, they veil'd under a disguise of Zeal, for the Glory of God, their own sinful Passions and uncharitableness, which proceeded so far as to cast out of their Religious Society and communion their Brethren, for no real Cause, but a strict and Conscientious adherence to God's Truth, and the way of his Commandments. No doubt, the Glory of God ought to be the great End of all we do, especially of our Religious Acts. But it does not follow, that that great Design will Consecrate every thing which Men imagin or pretend will serve it; or that the sure way of promoting the Glory of God, is, by

Conforming

Conforming ourselves to his Precepts, by keeping *them* we glorify him : By breaking *them* we Dishonour him ; let us pretend what we will : now if we Judge by this Rule, the Instances we have mention'd will shew whether it be for the Glory of God, to require and make Declarations in such Cases as Mr. Nevin's, that is, for purging an accused Person in Judgment of the Offence wherewith he is Charged.

The same Judgment is to be made concerning **EDIFICATION** ; a Word, which has been very much abused, to countenance *whatever* the mistaken Zeal of some has Tho't fit to impose on their Fellow Christians : But as the true Scriptural Notion of it, is, growth in Christian Knowledge, in Charity and the other Christian graces, the certain Measures in order to it must be those which God has prescrib'd in his Word. By obeying his Commandments we Edify both ourselves and others ; by disobeying *them*, we mar the Edification of both : Christians are not always Edified when they are *pleas'd*, or their Demands comply'd with, unless we put their Jealousies, Humours, and sinful infirmities in the place of the Christian Vertues.

AS for Christ's Commandment to *Confess his Name*, and even all the great Truths of the Gospel, *before Men* ; we hope, we shall always sincerely acknowledge the Obligation of it : But not to insist on an open resolv'd Profession of Christ's Religion before its Enemies, when it is attended with Persecution and Reproach, (which Our Lord seems particularly to have in view, when he requires his Disciples to *Confess him before Men*, and threatens such as deny and are ashamed of him, because of disgrace and other Temporal in-

conveniences which may attend their avowing him, that he will deny and be ashamed of them before his Father in Heaven ;) we observe concerning this Duty, as it relates to the more ordinary and peaceable State of things in the Christian Church, *FIRST*, as it is a positive Act of Religious obedience, wherein we cannot constantly be employ'd, Christians must Judge by the Gospel rules *when* and in *what* Circumstances they are to perform it, just as they must do with respect to other Duties ; for Example, tho' we have positive and express Precepts obliging us to pray *always*, and to *pray without ceasing* ; yet, it being evident that the meaning of these Precepts cannot be this, that in *every* instant of Time, the Duty of stated Prayer should be actually Perform'd for when God calls us to the Performance of other Duties, it wou'd be sinful in us to Defect or Omit other Duties in their proper Season tho' we should substitute the Duty of Prayer in their Room, so must we Judge concerning the Duty of *Confessing his Name*, that when the word of God calls us to the Performance of another Duty, *viz.* The defence of our Reputation by the Method which Christian Discipline obliges us to maintain it, by standing a Tryal upon Evidence, we must in *these* Circumstances plead for our Christian Rights, and Liberties founded on the Gospel-Charter, which is all the Confession of his Name and Truths required at our Hands in *that* Circumstances of Time, and will be accepted of Christ, when it is sincerely perform'd as an Instance of our faithful obedience to him and of our *Confessing his Name* and Authority.

2dly There is a great Difference to be made between a free and unforc'd Confession of Christ's Name

Name out of respect to his Authority injoin-
ing it, in pure obedience to his Laws, and in
the Cases and Circumstances wherein he directs,
which makes it a Religious Act, (which it is ap-
parent Mr. *Nevin* had often done); and a Con-
fession *Extorted* by Human Penalties, for the
Vindication of ourselves in Judgment before our
Fellow Christians, and to avoid their Resent-
ment by Complying with their Demands; which
we Apprehend to be *Unscriptural*, whereby a
Confession of the Name and Truths of Christ
would be debased, by turning it into a *Comple-*
ment to Human Power. And, LASTLY, there
is a great difference to be made between a
Christian's owning Religious Truths Explicit-
ly or Virtually in the course of his Religious
Profession, and by Solemn Acts of Devotion,
which God has Instituted, particularly a Mi-
nister's declaring them in the Course of his Mi-
nistrations (which it was offer'd to be Prov'd
in the Synod Mr. *Nevin* had frequently and
very lately done); and his declaring them up-
on an *Accusation*, rather declaring his own Inno-
cence, that he may be acquitted in Judgment,
which cannot be Comprehended in Christ's
Commandment, to *Confess him* and his Truths
before Men, because we have shown that in *that*
Case to *require* such a Confession, is *Contrary* to
his Laws.

To Conclude, altho' some boast of the Sy-
nod's great Zeal for the Glory of our Re-
deemer, the Peace of the Church, and even the
Vindication of Mr. *Nevin*, which indeed were
loudly Profess'd, and on the Contrary Mr. *Nevin*
is blaim'd for marring the Peace of the Church,
his own Character, and Usefulness, and for hav-

ing so little Zeal for Christ as not to Profess his Divinity, which yet he would have the World believe he really assented to, yet we leave it to be Judged by impartial Men, whether in *his Circumstances* any other Testimony could be given of his Zeal for the Honour of our Saviour, than by the stand he made against so plain an *Encroachment* upon the Christian Discipline Instituted by the exalted Head of the Church, who is *God over all Blessed for ever*. The keeping of whose Sacred Institutions, inviolable, is acceptable Service done to him.

REASON. III.

FROM these Considerations which we have already laid down, and which were offer'd in the Debates of the Synod before the Resolution was Voted, it may well be supposed that Mr. *Nevin* might Conscientiously scruple Submission to such a Demand, and accordingly he did declare that he could not in Conscience comply; yet, the Synod Voted that *it was their duty to require him to make a Declaration*: So that here was an express Synodical Commandment injoyning a Man to ACT AGAINST THE DECLARED LIGHT OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE, and a punishment inflicted for his refusing to do it! Had the Synod, since they differ'd from him in Opinion, resolved that they wou'd Reason with him, and endeavour to Convince him; it had been, we think, more Worthy of such an Assembly. But could it be

their Duty to require him to Sin against God, which he expressly Declared he must do if he obey'd their order! or could it be *their Duty* to give him a Commandment, which it would have been *his Sin* to obey.

By the Apostolical Rule, (*Rom. 14. 23*) he that doubteth, is Damned if he Eat, because he Eateth not of Faith: for whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, Mr. Nevin wou'd have been Guilty of a very dangerous Sin, had he made the Declaration enjoyned him, with a doubting Conscience. But Mr. Nevin went farther; for he went upon the Dictates, not of a doubting but a resolved Conscience; plainly Judging that in the Circumstances wherein he then Stood in Judgment before the Synod, it was a Violation of the Divine Law to make that Declaration, and that therefore he must obey God rather than Man; and his own Words, taken from his Mouth, are enter'd in the Minutes of the Synod, prior to their requiring the Declaration from him. Can any Christian, who believes the Truth of the Apostolical Decision, (*Rom. 14. 14.*) to him that esteemeth any thing to be Unclean, to him it is Unclean, Imagine, that Mr. Nevin (in the Light in which things appear'd to him) cou'd have made that Declaration, without contracting the guilt of horrid Impiety against God, by debauching his own Conscience, & doing what appear'd to him to be Prohibited by the Authority of God, in obedience to the Authority of Man! And therefore, we think, the Synod's Authoritative Demand of a Declaration from him in these Circumstances, so far from being their Duty, was a Dangerous Tempting him to commit a Presumptuous

206 *Reasons of a Protestation against Three*
sumptuous Sin, a *laying a Stumbling Block* before
him, and a very flagrant instance of *giving Offence*,
contrary to the expresse Commandments of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

IT must be expected in this state of Imper-
fection, that *Sincere* Christians will be of *different*
Opinions in *some things*; but these are cases
in which Ecclesiastical Authority does not take
Place. We do not find one Instance in Scrip-
ture wherein some Christians are Authoriz'd to
Injoyn others under the Penalty of Non-communication
to do what appears to them to be their Duty,
but which appears Sinful to the Persons on
whom the Injunction is laid; but there are many
Declarations of the Gospel to the Contrary, many
Precepts, requiring us to *forbear one another*, and
to receive into Communion those who differ us

SUCH Charity is so much the GENIUS
of our Holy Religion, that we think it ought
to be Extended to ALL differences among pro-
fessed Christians, EXCEPT those which af-
fect the very Vitals of Christianity, and for
which Christ has Commanded us to Separate.
We ought not to allow Communion to Men
of *Scandalous Lives*, or who *Err Fundamentally*,
tho' they should pretend Conscience to justify
their Wickedness or their Error. The Com-
mandment of our Saviour will bear us out in
withdrawing from them, and we are sure that
pretence of Conscience cannot be Sufficient to
gainst plain Declarations of Scripture; annex-
ing the Righteous Sentence of Damnation to
their Crimes, or Excommunication to their Scan-
dals. But to assert, that a set of Christians,
whatsoever Denomination, may require what
they Judge the Duty of their fellow Christians

(also)

(altho' it appears to themselves Sinful) under the Penalty of Non-Communion, even in Cases which are not plainly determin'd in Scripture, and such Strefs laid upon them that they are made Necessary to Salvation or Religious Communion, is to defeat the Excellent Gospel Rules, and Inspir'd Apostolic Decisions, requiring mutual forbearance and Joynt Communion of Christians whose Sentiments and Practices in lesser things are different, to Establish Imposition on Conscience, and to create and perpetuate Divisions in the Church. We Presume it will not be said, that for an Accused Person to refuse such a Declaration as shall be a Testimony for or against him in Judgment, is a cause of Separation, according to any plain Scripture Rules, or such an Offence against the very Vitals of Christianity by which a Title to Religious Communion is forfeited.

REASON. IV.

AS the whole Management against Mr. Nevin seem'd to us not very agreeable to that Wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable, Gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocrisy; So in particular, the Debates upon the Resolutions against which we have Protested, and the Measures taken in them, were in our Opinion not conducted with that Candor and Charity which ought to appear in all the proceedings of Ecclesiastical Assemblies: The very first Motion against Mr. Nevin, and by the acknowledgment

ment of several Members it had been concerted by a considerable Number, was for his Exclusion out of the Synod; a Motion for a Censure before a Tryal; as if it were to be taken for granted, he was Convicted without hearing him in his own Defence. And when the Person who made the Motion declared himself Satisfied with Mr. Nevin's Extemporary Apology, the Party whose private Concert had given rise to the Complaint shew'd themselves otherwise resolv'd. It was Evident, that the Affair could not possibly be issu'd by the Synod; for neither the Defendent nor Witnesses had any warning to attend a Tryal, nor could the Presbytery of *Down* (the proper and immediate Judges) put it in a Method of being Judged so soon, either by themselves or the Synod, because the *Affidavit* which gave occasion to the Prosecution was made so lately, that they had not so much as an Opportunity of meeting between the Date of it and the Synod.

IN such Circumstances it would seem, that all the Synod could well do, was, to appoint the Presbytery of *Down* to make a strict Enquiry into the Matter of alledged Offence, and they might have order'd Correspondents from other Presbyteries to have joyn'd in the Enquiry: But the Extraordinary Steps propos'd by some (and which by their prevailing Influence the Synod went into) shew'd an Eagerness which was too Impatient to wait for the regular Methods of Proceeding. Our *Constitution* gives no Countenance to the Commencement of such Prosecutions in the General Synod: Because such an Assembly as our Synod have not sufficient Time and Leisure to form an Accusation of

that Nature in clear and proper Terms, to make previous Search whether there be any Witnesses to support it, without which it ought not to be receiv'd in Judgment, and to take all the steps which are proper for preparing it for a just Issue. But a Presbytery who can meet frequently, and appoint Committees in their Intervals, to ripen the Affair, can take all prudent Measures for setting it in the clearest Light and preparing it for a just Decision. To invert this good order tends to render our Synods Contemptible, to involve them in perpetual Contention and Confusion, and to make them neglect all the proper Work for which they are Met, and by hasty and indeliberate Conclusions to Mismanage the Affairs which they in such a disorderly Manner, draw under their Cognizance. And, 'tis certain, that no Zeal whatsoever against the highest Offence ought to put Synods upon Measures destructive of just Discipline and good Order. And therefore when a Learned Professor of Divinity (Professor *Simson*) was Libell'd by a Minister of the Gospel before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, for Unsoundness in the Faith, that Venerable Assembly did not think their Zeal for Truth oblig'd them to overlook the usual and Just Rules of their Discipline: They remitted the *Libeller* to the Presbytery of which the *Professor* was a Member, the whole Process commenc'd there, and was carried regularly through the Judicatories of that Church in a fair open Proceeding, by Judging of the relevancy of the Articles, fixing the Sense of them, examining of Witnesses upon the Matters of Fact in Debate, without any Inquisitory Method for Issuing that Affair. Had

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this Method been pursued in Mr. *Nevin's* Case, the Credit of Religion, and the Justice and Wisdom of the Synod had been better Maintain'd : But instead of it, a Committee was Appointed to draw up what they called, *Grounds of Offence*, that it might be try'd whether there was any Handle for a Sentence against Mr. *Nevin*, even before the Main of his Cause could be fairly examin'd ; both before and after that Committee made their Report, and while not one of the Articles they Exhibited was or could be Debated, the general Strain of the Party's Speeches, and they had the Majority with them, run upon two things ; F I R S T, That Mr. *Nevin* should make a Declaration of the Supreme Deity of Christ ; which was a Point indeed that the *Affidavit* gave no shadow of an Occasion for (the Matter contain'd in it affording no cause of Suspicion concerning the *Orthodox* Doctrine as oppos'd to *Arianism*;) but it plainly appear'd from his printed Letter, that his making a Declaration in such Circumstances, was a Point wherein he could be pinch'd ; and therefore fit to be laid hold on by such as having no other Handle design'd to Exclude him, or else oblige him to give up a Principle which neither themselves nor any other Assembly of Presbyterians, so far as we know, ever declared to be a bad one, viz. That Inquisitory Methods ought not to be used for Issuing Scandal. 2dly, That Mr. *Nevin* should be Excluded from the Synod without a Tryal, upon the Fame of an Offence which was not Prov'd nor Examin'd ; which Method of Proceeding was pretended to be Countenanc'd by some Precedents of Ministers having been Suspended, even before a Tryal, upon Ap-
parently

parently gross Presumptions of heinous Scandal; but as it never can be just in any *Case*, it was notoriously Unreasonable in *this*, where no presumption of Guilt was Confess'd or could be Prov'd before the Synod, but such a Defence made to the same, that if it were true and it could not be Disprov'd, made the Accused appear to be wholly Innocent.

BY the *eager* Pursuit of those views which from the Commencement of the Debates appear'd in *all the Motions* of the Party and the run of their Speeches, it is too manifest, that the way of Treating Mr. *Nevin* (*viz.* by requiring a Declaration and casting him out of the Synod) was not the Result of a fair Impartial Examination of the Cause, so far as the Synod could examine it, but was *Preconcerted without Doors*; for it was avow'd and contended for before any Colour was given for it by any Charge against him, so that it must be carried one way or other; and the very Design of the Tryal before the Synod, seems to have been no other than to find out the *most plausible Handle* for what was beforehand privately Resolved. But the management of the *prevailing Party* in carrying the Vote for *requiring a Declaration*, and afterwards the Vote for *Exclusion* seem'd to be *SO ARTFUL*, that it can *hardly* be reconcil'd to the Rules of Justice and Candour: When a Rule is made by any Assembly, or any Injunction laid on any Person which shall have the force of a Law, and is to be followed with a Penalty; that Penalty ought in all Reason to be express'd so as it may be fully known, when the Order is publish'd and Obedience demanded, otherwise such an Assembly, instead of acting the Part of fair Governours, they

lay a Snare for the Persons they Treat after that manner, and surprize them into an Arbitrary Punishment. Now, there *never was* any general Rule in this Church, appointing Ministers or others to purge themselves upon an Accusation, under the Penalty of being cast out of Communion; and when the extraordinary Demand was made, that Mr. *Nevin* should so purge himself by a Declaration, there was not the least hint given him, that his Refusal to comply was to be punished with Non-communication; as if they intended not to Determine the Quality and Punishment of the suppos'd Offence, till he should be drawn into it. Nay, so far were they from declaring openly the Penal Consequence of Mr. *Nevin's* refusing a Declaration, that on the Contrary they gave Reason to believe no such thing was Designed. Tho' from the Beginning of the Debate some few insisted on a Judicial Demand of a Declaration; yet as *no One* Argument was offered to justify that way of Proceeding, some of the most judicious Members, who voted for the Declaration, expressly Affirm'd (as what they believ'd to be the Mind of the whole Synod, and none Contradicted it) that the Scripture Rules, particularly, *1 Tim. 5. 19.* and the Principles of Natural Equity allow'd no such way for issuing Scandal, and that an *authoritative Demand* could not be made, enforc'd with a Penalty; and therefore in their Speeches they soften'd the Demand into an Advice, which it might be expedient for Mr. *Nevin* to take in order to his own Vindication, and the Synod to give for the preventing the Peoples being dissatisfied with them; and therefore it may be reasonably supposed, that *MANY* might go into the Resolution, of *requiring a Declaration*

ration from Mr. *Nevin*, who had *no Intention* insist upon it as an authoritative Demand to be enforced with the Penalty of Non-communication in Case of Non-compliance; and who would have voted for such a Declaration, if the whole Scheme had been fairly and candidly laid open to them before the Question was put.

THE Reason of this Conduct, we do not know of all the Members who voted against Mr. *Nevin*; but of those who *Principally directed* the proceedings of the Synod in that Affair, seems to have been, that they might secure the greater Number to Vote for the Declaration, which was a necessary Part of the Scheme they had formed in order to Exclude Mr. *Nevin*. When LEADERS of their Party found they were unable to justify their Motion by Arguments, that some whose Reasonings and Examples were much regarded in the Synod, could not go to their Measures, but declared openly against the judicial authoritative Demand of a Declaration, so that there was Cause to apprehend that the Question would not have been carried by so great a Majority in that Form; therefore they were willing to pass it on the Synod for an Adjournment only which many went into, without any view of the absurd Consequences of loading it with the Penalty of Non-communication. Having obtained a Majority for the Declaration, the Session of the Synod was ended without any view of the next step to be taken: But in the Interval before the next Session (being *Friday Afternoon*) many of the Members who were known to be the most moderate and Impartial went against the Committee who were the Managers against Mr. *Nevin*, had a sufficient Number (about 34 Ministers and about 20 Elders) to be a Majority

214 *Reasons of a Protestation against Three*
Majority in the small remains of the Synod, who
were prepar'd to go all their Lengths, even
Vote an Exclusion without arguing for it; nay, they
plainly declined reasoning, and when Arguments
from Scripture were offer'd against their Proceed-
ings, and they were *often called upon to Answer*
them, they never so much as attempted it, but
some expressly said, they would *ANSWER*
BY A VOTE!

REASON. V.

IT appears to us, that to require a Decla-
ration from Mr. Nevin in the Circumstances
wherein the Synod required it, was Inconsistent
with a fair Impartial proceeding, naturally tend-
ing to Embarrass the Tryal of his alleged
Offence, to prejudge the Cause either *for or*
gainst him, and to give or increase Scandal.
Illustrate this Reason, we desire it may be re-
membred that three Articles against Mr. Nevin
founded on the *Affidavit*, and his Printed Let-
ter, had been by the Synod refer'd to the Presby-
tery of Down with Correspondents, which clearly
demonstrates, that, in *their opinion*, there was no
matter of Offence to be inquir'd into, if upon ex-
amination it were found to be true, or if Mr. Nevin
cou'd not justify the Account he had given
in his printed Letter, and in his Defence before
the Synod, he was to be reputed Guilty and
be censur'd. Now as the said matter of Offence
was contain'd in these Words, *It is not Blasphemous*
to say that Christ is not God; if upon Examination
it shou'd be found that these Words were used

Mr. N--- *ABSOLUTELY* and *without the Limitations* and Qualifications which he pretended were added by him, what does the Scandal amount to whereof he must be Convicted? Certainly, to an Affront to the Honour of our blessed Saviour, that is, to his Divinity, and inconsistent with an uniform Belief and Profession of that Important Truth. And tho' the Synod did *not State* the Nature and Quality of the Scandal so fully as they ought to have done, since they took upon them to form the Libel or Accusation; yet, that this was the Sense they had of it, is apparent from their unanimous Vote upon the *Third Article*; since Mr. N--- was thus accused by the Synod themselves, and a Method appointed for Tryal, no Steps ought to have been taken which might tend to mar a free and impartial Inquiry, and to prepossess his Judges either in his Favour or to his Disadvantage. But we are of Opinion that a solemn Declaration of Christ's Divinity requir'd of him and made by him in those Circumstances, must necessarily have such a tendency; for either it must be believ'd by the Judges, the natural Effect of which wou'd be to hinder their Examination; or giving Credit to such Testimony of Witnesses, as might be to Contradict it; or if it were disbeliev'd, they must have a more Injurious Impression than it never had been made, and receive all Informations in that matter with very strong Prejudice. Therefore it seems to us that in such Circumstances, that is, in the Commencement of a Tryal and before Examination of Witnesses, the Judicatory, so far from requiring an accus'd Person to purge himself, they ought not to allow him even if he willingly offer'd it. **BUT.**

BUT let us make the supposition that Mr. N--- had in Compliance with the Synod's demand declar'd very fully and solemnly on the Subject of Christ's Divinity, and that afterwards it was found upon Tryal, that he had spoken the Words mention'd in the *Affidavit ABSOLUTELY* and without Limitation, or in the *most Offensive* manner, charg'd against him in the Accusation (a supposition which impartial Judges ought to make, at least so far that nothing on their Part shou'd be done which might be inconsistent with it) what in that Case must be the Consequence? Certainly that Mr. N--- is convicted of what the Judgment of the Synod is very injurious to the Honour of our Redeemer, that is, which Contradicts the Profession of his Divinity; accordingly he must be censur'd as an Offender against that grand Article. But what Judgment then shou'd be pass'd upon his Declaration? No doubt, it wou'd greatly aggravate the Scandal, being an Act of solemn Diffimulation added to it, and of this Aggravation the Synod must be Guilty by requiring it.

BUT there is *another Supposition* which the Synod had Reason to have made, before they requir'd the Declaration of him, and which the Event has proved, *viz.* that he might conscientiously Scruple the making of such a Declaration altho' it *did not proceed from a disbelief of the Divine itself*. The requiring such a Declaration from him, did naturally tend to expose him to popular Odium and Fury, and to encrease Jealousies and Calumnies which have been solicitously and wickedly vented, Entertain'd, Propagated against him and the *Non-subscribers* in general: 'Tis true, that Men of understand

and Consideration, who have Read the Controversy, can easily Distinguish between a *Mans Denying* the Divinity of Christ, and his refusing when he is accus'd and stands in Judgment, to *purge himself* of Heresy in obedience to an *Inquisition set up in a Protestant Church* : But 'tis Notorious, that there are Thousands, whose Weakness is so great, or their Prejudices so strong, that they will not believe any Man to be Sound in the Faith, who on any pretence whatsoever will decline such a Declaration, and with all such must Mr. N. pass for an Heretick. If it be the great Duty of Ministers of the Gospel to prevent, as far as possible, all Uncharitable Jealousies of their Brethren, and to cure and remove them, when they appear, by detecting and refuting the gross Errors of Judgment upon which they are Founded; then it must be a great Sin in them to make such Demands of their Brethren, as they see will load their Characters with unjust Reproaches; and *they must be Accessory* to the Sin of those who are guilty of such Calumnies, while instead of using means to remove them, they are doing what tends to confirm and encrease them : And in the present Case, while every Elder, who is to Judge in Mr. N---'s Cause is deputed by a Session, and while *their Constituents and Neighbours* are fill'd with Jealousies and prepossess'd with Prejudices against him, encreas'd by the Demands of the Synod, is not Justice in great Hazard of being perverted in his Case ? And the Ministers who are to be his Judges are Teaz'd and Threatned by their Hearers, and solicited to Vote against him; and their Voting either for or against him is apt to be made A TEST,

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whereby

whereby People will try their Ministers, and upon which they are ready to conduct 'em selves accordingly, in *adhering* to or *forsaking* their Ministry. To these sad and dismal Circumstances are these poor divided Churches brought amongst us, that the Honest and Faithful Ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ are in hazard of being Rejected by their Hearers, if they shou'd attempt to do an Act of common Justice to Mr. N. and it must be own'd, that these are strong Temptations to Ministers 'em selves, who are Men of like Passions with others : All these Evils are chargeable on the Conduct of the Synod in Mr. N---'s Case, tho' we are far from charging them upon their Design and Intention.

REASON VI.

VVHEREAS the Synod declares in the 3^d Resolution, that " they will not proceed any farther in Mr. *Nevin's* Tryal, " This we think inconsistent with the Zeal which they ought to have, and which themselves profess, for the Honour of our Redeemer and for the Edification of the Churches. We have already observ'd, that the Words alledg'd to be Spoken by Mr. N. viz. *It is no Blasphemy to say that Christ is not God*, were declared by the Synod to be highly Injurious to the Honour of our Redeemer, which was the profess'd Reason, and indeed the only Just one, for their Commencing a Prosecution against him on the Occasion of the Affidavit, and their appointing the

Presbyter

Presbytery of *Down* with Correspondents to enquire into the suppos'd Scandal contain'd in these Words, since they found 'twas not Cognizable by 'emselfes. Now it appears to us, that a Principle of Zeal for the Glory of Christ, exerting itself uniformly, shou'd have induc'd the Synod to pursue the Inquiry into an Offence of such a Nature by all regular Methods in their Power; when such a Trespas against his Honour was alledg'd to be Committed by one of their Persuasion, especially by a Minister of the Gospel and a Member of their own Body, nothing but its being Impracticable cou'd discharge 'em from an Obligation to examine it according to the Rules of Christian Discipline, that so they might avoid a Participation in such a Guilt, and remove the Scandal given to the Churches. But 'twas so far from being Impracticable, that the Synod had fix'd on the regular Method for Tryal, viz. By the Presbytery of *Down* with Correspondents, and Mr. N. was so far from declining it, that he very earnestly press'd to be Tried: Even Justice to him requir'd it shou'd be done, and much more becoming Zeal for the Glory of God and the Purity of our religious Profession, that it might not suffer the Reproach of such alledg'd indignity done to our Blessed Saviour among us, and not Search'd into by those whose PROVINCE 'twas, as having the Exercise of Discipline in their Hands.

WE are very sorry that in such Circumstances the Reverend Synod shou'd expressly say, that they will not proceed any further in Mr. Nevin's Tryal; which is, as far as their Authority can, to prohibit any Inquiry at all: If the Pres-

bytery of *Down* will conform themselves to this plain Declaration of the Synod's mind, they must treat the Scandal with the same Neglect, and no other Persons or Assembly can according to the Methods of our Discipline take it under their Cognizance: Whereby all the Dishonour to our Profession, with the ill Effects of it arising from the Charge of such an Affront to our Redeemer, must be fix'd as the necessary Consequence of the Synod's Authoritative Resolution.

THE Vote of the Synod Excluding Mr. M from Ministerial Communion, in pursuance of which they resolv'd to meddle no farther with his Cause, was exceedingly injurious to him as cutting him off from the proper and most advantageous means of getting Justice done and therefore we can't but think, very Harsh and Uncharitable. In the regular Course of our Discipline, the Presbytery of *Down* (with Correspondents, if the Synod pleas'd) shou'd have been laid under Appointment to take Cognizance of the Articles Exhibited against him which the Synod cou'd not Judge; Examining all Evidences, which THEY, *not the Synod*, had an easy Opportunity of doing, and accordingly pass Sentence; from whence an APPEAL to Superior Judicatories, shou'd in case of his finding himself aggriev'd be his Relief. This is the Method in which the Tryal shou'd have been put, in order to a fair Issue.

THE Charge against him was Commenced by the Synod, made up of a Complication of things: Which, if as True, as they were heinous, must have rendered him deservedly Culpable: And since they entred upon the Consideration

sideration of 'em at all, it was evidently incumbent upon 'em, to go thro' what they cou'd, and refer to his Presbytery what necessarily fell within their Province; which accordingly they propos'd to do, and Mr. N. undertook to make his Innocence appear in due Time, before the proper Judicatory. But how did the Synod deal with him, after all? Having found that they cou'd fix no Guilt upon him, by any thing in the Libel; From Mr. N---'s declar'd Principle against Inquisitory Methods, in order to Issue Scandal, they tho't fit to *take a Handle* to make him Guilty of Disobedience to 'em, by requiring his Compliance with *such a Method*; and upon his CONSCIENTIOUS Refusal, Excluded him from Ministerial Communion, broke off his Tryal, Resolv'd they wou'd have no more to do with him, or it, and refus'd to renew the Appointment upon his Presbytery, before determin'd. Thus were all his hopes of obtaining his greatly desir'd Vindication, in the ordinary and most effectual way, defeated and dash'd.

CAN such Treatment be reconcil'd to that regard to Justice and Charity, which might be expected, if any where, to be found in an Assembly of the Servants of *Jesus Christ the King of Righteousness*, met with a Profest Design to advance the Important Interests of his Kingdom? 'Tis the known laudable Method in other Courts, that the Man who stands in Judgment before 'em, tho' even of a very infamous Character, has his Cause fairly Tried, and instead of an high-Strain'd Severity bearing hard upon him, meets with all reasonable Condescension and Indulgence, and has the utmost Opportunities and

and Advantages for Vindicating himself, if he can, allow'd him by 'em, as willing, to find him clear if he be so. But we are sorry to observe, in the Synod's Conduct towards Mr. N--- besides that there evidently was, if not an openly avow'd, yet too much of an *apparent Solicitude* and Desire, to find their accus'd Brother Guilty, with suitable Endeavours to Strain and Stretch every thing, that might serve such an *Inglorious purpose* : Besides all this, such an extraordinary Step was taken with him, as depriv'd him of the best Methods of relieving his Character from very grievous Calumnies. And tho' those who had given the original occasion to 'em, were Persons of our Communion, and 'tis the acknowledg'd and allow'd Right of any Man, who has been injur'd by such, to apply to our Judicatories for redress ; to demand that they be Cited and Examined before them, and that he have Liberty to confront 'em with Evidences if he can, 'tis his Right also to prosecute the injurious Party, thro' our several Judicatories, if there be occasion, in order to a Satisfactory Issue : Yet such was Mr. Newin's hard Fate, that the Minute, which declares that the Synod will proceed no farther in his Tryal, or have any farther Ministerial Communion with him, is a *DISCOURAGEMENT* to other Judicatories to do him common Justice. Was this reasonable or equitable Dealing ? Was it consistent with *brotherly Kindness* ? Can it be easily admitted, that the Synod acted in this matter, under the *Influences* of the *Divine Spirit of Love*, which disposes Men to Treat their Brother candidly and favourably, and as it rejoices not in Iniquity, so feels a great deal of Satisfaction in the

True

Truth, in the Discovered Innocence of another? To say that the Synod had a due Concern for Mr. *Nevin's* Vindication, and yet hindred his access to it, in the best way, is to us unintelligible.

IN this Management of the Synod, how hardly Mr. *Nevin* was dealt with, when so deep a Wound was given to his Reputation, and the proper remedy precluded, may be easily apprehended by every one that considers, that a good Name is better than precious Ointment, that a Man's Reputation is a very tender Part, as all his Comforts in human Society, as a Member of it, are in such a strict Connection with it, that they stand or fall together: And of still greater Importance, and a matter of more sensible concern to a Minister of the Gospel, is the Dependence of his usefulness upon his Character, so as the loss of his *Reputation*, is the loss of his *Usefulness*. Let any Man indeed who has any of the remains of Humanity, any Sense of Justice, present to himself a Brother and Minister of the Gospel, *standing at the Bar of the Synod*, accus'd of very heinous Crimes, striking at the Root of his usefulness, *PLEADING* for Justice, and in order to it, that his *TRYAL* might be put in the proper Method of being Issued, that he might be deliver'd from a Load of Infamy very heavy to be born; and in such Circumstances thrown off by the Synod, having the Channel of Justice stop'd upon him, left and expos'd to all the Odium, contemptuous Usage, outrageous Reproaches and Outcries of many, who are apt to believe the worst of a certain sort of Men, and accordingly to Treat them, especially will not fail so to Conduct themselves towards a Man expell'd by the

the Synod from Ministerial Communion, which they will Interpret as a sufficient Evidence of his being Guilty of what was laid to his Charge, and make use of, as a Sanction to their Uncharitableness. Let any Man **CONSIDER ALL THIS**, and say, Whether that grand Maxim of Equity, to be observ'd by all, and inculcated by the Synod upon others, *whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye likewise to them*, was duly regarded by the Synod? And whether there be not too good Reason for alledging that the usage Mr. Nevin met with was *extremely harsh and injurious* to him?

THE only Pretence for thus declining any farther Tryal of the Offence charg'd on Mr. Nevin, for an exprefs Resolution against it, was his refusing to comply with the Synod's Demand of a Declaration, which in our opinion is far from being sufficient. For besides that the Demand itself was at least *very Disputable*, his refusing a Declaration did not render a farther Tryal of the Accusation against him impracticable, which he was still willing to undergo, nor cou'd it give Satisfaction to the great Multitude of Christians who must be Scandaliz'd by the said very Public Accusation, and consequently cou'd be no just Reason for the Synod's resolving against an Inquiry, which the *plain Rules of God's Word*, a becoming Zeal for the Redeemer's Honour, and all the important Ends of *Christian Discipline* so loudly call for: Nay, farther in the Judgment of the Synod themselves, Mr. Nevin's refusing a Declaration was a far less Offence than the **OTHER** with which he was charg'd, *viz.* saying, *That it was not Blasphemy, &c.* The **LATTER** they declar'd highly injurious to the Honour of our Redeemer, and therefore

Therefore deserving of a very Severe Censure ;
or the other, they *only Exclude* him out of their
Society, tho' we believe that they still regard
him as a Minister, *many of them* having express-
ly declar'd this after his Exclusion, as appears
by the *Minutes* of the Synod, and **NONE**
having declared the contrary, and because the
Synod has *not inflicted* upon him a Sentence of
Suspension or *Deposition*. Now, shou'd a *small*
trespass Supersede the Tryal of a *very Heinous*
one ? Shou'd a little **SUPPOS'D AFFRONT** to
Synodical Authority prevent an Inquiry into an
alleg'd **HIGH AFFRONT** to Christ ? Or in
this, shou'd the Zeal of the Synod for *their*
own Power, and in a Matter at best of *doubt-*
ful Disputation so **FLAME**, as to make their
Zeal for our Redeemer **FLAG** to such a de-
gree, that they wou'd no more concern them-
selves in a Matter, which till then they had
declar'd their Respect to his Blessed Name, had
oblig'd 'em with the utmost Earnestness and
Diligence to inquire into !

R E A S O N. VII.

AS the Censure inflicted on Mr. N-- is Un-
precedented among us, and in *other Church-*
es of our Persuasion ; so we apprehend it to
be contrary to **REASON** and to the **SCRIP-**
TURE RULES concerning Religious Commu-
nion. We have never heard of *any such Proceed-*
ings in Ecclesiastical Assemblies, as casting a
Minister out of their particular Communion
while they own'd him as a Minister in all o-
ther

other Respects, and allow'd him the free Exercise of his Ministry: And we believe there are no Censures of Ministers, according to the Discipline of the Presbyterian Churches, Particularly that of *Scotland* hitherto Practised among us, which affect the exercise of the Pastoral Office, but **SUSPENSION**, not from a part but the whole of the Ministry, and **DEPOSITION**. The Reverend Synod ought to have considered that by casting a Minister, and withdrawing him the People under his Pastoral Care, out of their **ASSOCIATION**, they weaken their own Interest and lay such a Foundation, as if this Act be drawn into Precedent, Tends to *Dissolve their Constitution*; when Ministers are Suspended or Desposed, the Judicatories exercising that Authority claim the Congregations as under their own Care; and the Constitution is not Broken: But when Ministers are cast out without being Suspended or Deposed, they, and their People (who are taught by the Judicatories themselves to Regard them still as their Pastors, or else they must take a Method of Ejecting them which is *Unpresbyterian*) are disjoyned from the Association; And therefore are set up by themselves, whereby **INDEPENDENCY** succeeds in the Place of **PRESBYTERY**. Besides, a Minister and Congregation cast out by the Synod, retaining still their Profession as Presbyterians, are led by their Principle to Associate with others, that they may Act as Presbyterians: Which the Synod, as far as they can, render Impracticable, the tendency of which is to a *stated Schism*, and *separate Association*; and that by a Natural Consequence from the Synod's Act. We Conclude, therefore

that when there is no Just Ground to Suspend or depose a Minister (as we believe the Synod were Convinc'd there was not in the Case of Mr. *Nevin*) there can be no sufficient Reason for casting him out of a Particular Association; and it do's not consist with the Presbyterian Constitution, to do so.

LET it be considered likewise, that Ministerial Communion is a Privilege, and to Maintain it is a Duty, which necessarily results from a Person's being duly called to and Qualified for the Ministry; If it be not, Ministerial Communion rests upon no Scriptural Foundation at all. We cannot Apprehend any thing which discharges us or others from an Obligation to perform the Offices which belong to a Gospel Minister, as Providence gives Opportunity, whether that Sinful Terms of Communion are imposed, or, that he has forfeited his Title to the Ministerial Character or Office: But in the Case of Mr. *Nevin*, it cannot be pretended that Sinful Terms are imposed; He do's not require, as the condition of Communion with him, that either Ministers or People should do what their Consciences disallow (which is the True meaning of Imposing Sinful Terms); and he has not forfeited the Ministerial Character and Office even in the Judgment of the Synod, as appears by the Reasons already Men- tioned. Is it to be thought, that a Person is qualified to Preach the Gospel, Administer Sacraments, and perform all the other parts of the Pastoral Office to a Christian People; yet unworthy to Joyn with his Fellow Ministers and others in the Affairs of Discipline and Church Government, which are of far less Importance?

FOR these Reasons we have found ourselves oblig'd to Protest against the above Mention'd Resolutions of the Reverend Synod; Declaring that we have no other Design than to Discharge our own Consciences, and to Testify the Respect which we think due from us to the Honour of our Profession, to the Rules of Scripture, Justice, and Christian Discipline. And we think ourselves in Conscience bound to maintain Ministerial Communion with the Reverend Mr, *Nevin* as we shall have Opportunity, from which Communion our Brethren have cast him out (in our Opinion) *without Cause*. In this we have the greater Satisfaction, because our Brethren who differ from us as well as we, and all with whom he has been Conversant, know him to be a Person of Exemplary Life and Eminent Ministerial Abilities.

THIS Resolution of ours will not be surprising to any who are well acquainted with Protestant Principles; ONE of which, as is very well expressed in our *Confession of Faith* is, that *Synods and Councils are not to be a Rule of Faith or Christian Practice, but to be used as an help in both*: therefore every Christian is to Judge of their Decisions by Scripture and Reason, and to be so far only determined by them, as they Judge the Arguments upon which their decisions are Built, Conclusive; to be determined by their Authority, *without Judging of the Reasonableness and Equity of their Decisions*, is, to make them a RULE of Christian Practice and not to use them as an *HELPER*. This is so Essential a Principle of the Protestant Religion, that with it PROTESTANTISM stands

falls: If you take away this, our Reformation from Popery can't be Justify'd; but must be accounted Rebellion against the Authority of Synods and Councils, and our Glorious Reformers Rebels against their Spiritual Superiors. But if you lay down this as a good Rule, the Reformation is Justified; and our Reformers appear under the glorious Character of the Rescuers of the Christian Religion from the Errors, Absurdities, and Superstition which that Antichristian Church had mixed with it, and of the Consciences of Christians from the vilest of Slavery, *Subjection to the Commandments and Doctrines of Men in matters of Religion.*

WE have then in pursuance of this Principle, which declares the Right and Duty of Christians, carefully and Impartially examin'd the Resolutions of the Synod by Scripture and Reason, and find them to be Contrary both to the express Rules given us in Scripture for the issuing of Scandal and the Laws of natural Equity, as the above Reasons will make appear, we are persuaded, to every Impartial Person; and therefore think ourselves under no Obligation to Act in Obedience to the Synod's Resolution, but under an *Indispensable Obligation* to Act contrary to it, and still to maintain Ministerial Communion with Mr. Nevin as far as it is in our Power, seeing he is a Minister against whose Life and Doctrine there has hitherto appear'd no just Exception. The Reverend Synod cannot but Remember that we unanimously concurred in all the Resolutions which they made for the fair impartial Tryal of the Scandal laid to his Charge in the *Affidavit*, and both he himself and we were as willing that that matter shou'd be fully enquired

enquired into as any in the Synod; so far were we from Endeavouring to Skreen him from Justice, that we had nothing more at Heart than that Justice shou'd be done him, and our Profession free'd from Reproach, by either inflicting just Censure on him if Convicted, or acquitting him if Innocent; and that a stop is put to that fair Method of enquiry, in which the Synod by their Preceeding Resolutions had put this Affair, is what we complain of as Injurious to the Honour of our Redeemer, and to the Credit of our Profession.

THO' we are sensible that the Foot on which the Exclusion of Mr. *Nevin* is founded makes it very unpopular for us to maintain Ministerial Communion with him, and that our Conduct may be Misrepresented to load us with Reproach, yet we are not discouraged thereby from doing what we think our Duty, and whatever Misconstructions may be put on Mr. *Nevin's* refusal to comply with the Demand made by the Synod, yet we are persuaded, Our Lord Jesus Christ our *Lawgiver* and our *Judge*, who has told us that *keeping his Commands* is the strongest Proof that we can give him of our Love to him, (and one of whose Commandments it is that no Accusation is to be *received against an Elder* but at the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, that is, that a Prosecution of Scandal should not be Commenced nor issued but by the Testimony of Witnesses) will look upon his Conduct, in refusing to countenance the issuing of Scandal any other way, and thus bringing in an unscriptural Discipline into his Church, as the strongest Proof he cou'd give in his Circumstances of his Love to him, and his *Regard* for his Honour and Authority as the

SOLE LAW-GIVER. **BEFORE**

BEFORE we conclude this Paper, we think it necessary in Justice to the Synod, to observe, that there was but a *small Number* in Comparison of the Body of Dissenting Ministers and Elders who make up the Synod, *viz.* about **THIRTY FOUR** Ministers, when those who are in *greatest Reputation* among us for Judgment and Experience were generally gone, and about **TWENTY** Elders that concurred in these Resolutions, against which we have Protested, and Consequently the *BODY* of Dissenting Ministers and Elders in the *North of Ireland* had no Hand in Introducing this New and Extraordinary Discipline in the Room of what Christ appointed in his Church; and no just Cause of Reflection lies against *them* for what was the Act of so *small* and *Inconsiderable* a Part of their Body. And as we Protested not in our own Name only, but in the Name of all that adhered to us, we think it reasonable that all who had no Hand in those Transactions should seriously consider the necessity of opposing the **DANGEROUS INNOVATIONS** against which we have found ourselves obliged to Protest.

The End of the Reasons.

BEFORE

BEFORE I Finish this *Trial*, I shall briefly mention a few Reasons not taken Notice of in the Preceeding *Protestation*, which were offer'd to Justifie the Demand the Synod made upon me, and then shut up the whole with some General Observations.

I. It was urg'd that both in *Chancery* and the *Consistorial Court*, a Man is oblig'd to Answer upon Oath in the one and purge himself in the other. To which this Reply was made, No Man can Require an Oath but according to Law, and so the Case with respect to these Instances given stands: The practice is founded, at least in *Chancery*, upon the Laws of the Nation, and in the other upon the Canon Law which is made the Rule of that Court: To make the Parallel hold good, there must be a Law in the Gospel produc'd, Empowering the Church to make the Like Demand. But besides, in *Chancery* no Man is bound to swear against himself in a *Criminal*, but only in matters of Account and Property: And the practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts in that Case, has ever been complain'd of by *Dissenters* as unjust and contrary to the Maxims of natural Equity.

II. WHEREAS there had been often an Answer desir'd to the Argument taken from *Tim. 5. 19. against an elder receive not an Accusation* &c. It was alledged that *imagining the King's Death* was Treason in the Eye of the Law; in like manner, tho' I had not by any overt act Denied the *Deity* of Christ, yet if I wou'd not make a *DECLARATION* of my belief of it, 'twas Equivalent to my *IMAGINING* it; and so I might be Proceeded against, tho' no Witnesses were

duc'd. If this Argument had come from one
not suppos'd to understand the Law it had been
as surprizing, and altogether not worth being
taken notice of. But as his Character for know-
ledge in that Matter is Considerable, it might
be for Unanswerable, if it were not Mention'd;
that it needs no other answer than to observe,
that *Imagining* the King's Death must be prov'd
by some *overt-act*, before it can be punished as
reason; and so the Parallel, lame as it is, o-
therwise falls to the Ground, and can never be
suppos'd to carry any shadow of Reason with
it for superseding that Apostolical Canon, which
reaches alike to all Cases, and depends not on-
ly upon a Reveal'd Authority, but is the Voice
of eternal Reason.

I must Mention one other Argument upon
the account also of its coming from a Mem-
ber of no small influence and figure on that
Council, viz. That the Synod in Demanding a *De-
claration* from me in this Point, did no more,
than was Practis'd by our Civil Judicatories in
the Tryal of every Criminal, who was oblig'd
to answer to that Question, on the very En-
durance of it, **GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY?**
I shall make no Reflection on what is very ob-
vious in this way of Reasoning; but only ob-
serve, that if this had satisfied the Synod, the
matter wou'd have been speedily Ended, for
he pleaded not Guilty, and call'd for any E-
vidence, nay so much as a Presumption, that I
believ'd the *Supreme Deity* of Christ, and told
them that with equal Justice they might Charge
me with the *Sin* against the *Holy Ghost*.

I have now brought my Narrative as far as
H h the

the Synod Proceeded in the *Libel*; there Remained one bulky complex Article in the Charge against me, which was not taken into Consideration at all. I believe it is a very singular Practice that a Man accus'd shou'd be Condemn'd upon a meer incidental Debate in the midst of the Tryal, before the whole Charge was heard and Examin'd into. But these Men who have chang'd their tune so far, as to plead for Moderate Penalties in the Affairs of Conscience, are come also to like the short way with Dissenters. They wou'd have no more to do with such a Rebel to their mild and just Authority. And for my Part I am well enough Satisfied to leave their last Article, And my Answer to it, to the Judgment with the World just as they stand.

AND whereas it is alledged in the Preceeding Reasons of the Protestation, that the Vote of Exclusion was carried against me only by an inconsiderable part of the whole Body, and that the more Judicious and Experienc'd of the Ministers were gone before it pass'd, which I look upon as a very Material Circumstance not only for my own Vindication, but for setting the whole Affair in a true Light, and lest any shou'd be blam'd or suspected, who had no Hand in it. I shall here Subjoyn a List of such who are entirely Innocent in the Vote of my Exclusion, as well as a List of those who Carried it in the Manner, that is describ'd in the said Reasons.

A List of the Ministers who

did not Joyn in the Vote of Exclusion.

Down Presbytery.

The Rev'd M^{SSRS}.

Ames Bruce

Ja. Macalpine

Ja. Shannon

Will. Smith

Will. Biggar

Ja. Reid

Arch. Dickson

Frans. Montgomery

Tho. Elder

Jo. Mears

Nath. Orr

Hugh Willamson

Jo. Orr

Tirone Presbytery.

Hugh Wallace

Derry Presbytery.

And. Ferguson

Jo. Harvey Senr.

Will. Cornwall

Ja. Wallace

Tho. Harvey

Sam. Ross

Major Murray

Wm. Cochran

Will. Cunningham

Tho. Strawbridge

Belfast Presbytery

Jo. Malcom

Frans. Iredel

And. Crawford

Ja. Kirkpatrick

Ja. Cobham

Jo. Ridal

Rob. Sinclaire

Sam. Haliday

Cha. Seaton

Rob. Wirling

Rob. Craighead

Mic. Bruce

Tho. Maquay

Sam. Harper

Pat. Bruce

Ja. Frazer

Tho. Craford

Jo. Hasty

Armagh Presbytery.

Arch. Maclaine Senr.

Jo. Hutcheson

Jo. Wilson

Cha. Wallace

Moses Cherry

Ja. Fleming

Rob. Rainey

Ja. Johnstone

Hu. Henry

Will. Gray

Pat. Simson

Arch. Maclaine Junr.

Jo. Menogh

Strabane Presbytery.

Ja. Maxwell
 Tho. Winsly
 Wm. Holms
 Jo. Ball
 Alex. Macrackan
 Neh. Donaldson
 Isaac Taylor
 Victor Ferguson
 Jos. Hemphil

Augher Presbytery.

Rob. Coltheart
 Humph. Thomson
 Bapt. Boyd
 Alex. Fleming
 Josias Cornwall
 Will. Hair
 Rob. Thomson
 Alex. Hamilton
 Pat. Plunket
 Tho. MacLaine
 Sam Irvin
 Sam. Hemphil
 Nath. Glasgow
 Jo. Carlisle
 Jo. Paton
 Jo. Bond
 And. Dean

Antrim Presbytery.

Will. Taylor Senr.

In no Presbytery, Alex. Mcc.Crackan Senr.

Will. Leech
 Alex. Brown
 Jo. Abernethy
 Ja. Crichton
 Tho. Shaw
 Tho. Willson
 Jo. Henderson
 Will. Taylor Junr.
 Ja. White
 Josias Clugstone

Colrain Presbytery.

Rob. Haltridge
 Rob. Higginbottom
 Jo. Porter
 Tho. Cobham
 Ja. Thomson
 Jo. Elder
 Jo. Orr

Letterkenny Presbytery.

Seth Drummond
 Sam. Henry
 Sam. Dunlop
 Cha. Lynn
 Rob. Wilson
 Fra. Laird
 Da. Fairly
 Jo. Holms
 Pat. Vance

OF the above *List* some had not been Present in any Session of the Synod, some had been Present in every Session but the last where in I was *Excluded*, some in fewer, some Present in the very last Session and were silent not answering

answering their Names, when they were call'd; some were present when the *Excluding Motion* against me was made, and left the House before it was Voted. How many or how few of those, who were absent, wou'd have Voted for denying me *Ministerial Communion*, had they been Present, I will not take upon me to Determine; and therefore I think Justice to them obliges me to publish 'em all in the above List, that the World may see, that no covert act of theirs in the Synod has made them justly Chargeable with the *extraordinary Issue* of this Tryal. And before they approve of the Judgement pass'd against me, I presume they will think themselves oblig'd in Conscience to consider Seriously and Maturely what I have said before the World in this History of my Tryal, and especially what is said by the Excellent and abler Hands, who drew up the Reasons of the above Protestation: Remembering that however they may have many more to Joyn with them in condemning my *Conduct* at the Synod, that all of us must stand in Judgement before the Lord Jesus, and give an account of all the deeds done in the Body. Nor will it be any sufficient Reason for them to approve the sentence of *Exclusion* pass'd against me, tho' thou'd appear too warm in some part of my present Defence, which I do assure them is not owing to any want of the just Measures of Clarity and *Forgiveness*, I ought to have to my Brethren, who have thus injur'd me; but from a Sense of my own *Innocence*, and a sincere desire to prevent any such violent Methods for the future. And I leave it in Judgement with all Impartial Men, whether the Establishing a new

new **INQUISITORY** Discipline, and inflicting a new Censure unknown to all Presbyterian Churches before, was a Work proper for these few Hands, who Concluded and Voted it, in the absence and without the Concurrence of more than three fourth parts of their own Body; and whether such Treatment did not deserve all the Resentment I have here shown, and in the meantime I do assure every one, that I can and do heartily Pray for the Welfare and Happiness of those, who have done me this or any other Injury.

A List of the Ministers who

Voted for not allowing Ministerial Communion, &c.

Down Presbytery.

The Rev'd MSSRS.

JO. Gaudy

Hen. Hamilton

Tyrone Presbytery.

Hen. Crooks

Tho. Kennedy

Jo. Maclave

Tho. Mulligan

Da. Tomb

Jo. Kennedy

Alex. Moor

Natha. Cochran

Ja. Dykes

Ro. Stuart

Ja. Orr

Derry Presbytery.

Jo. Stirling

Jo. Harvey Junr.

Letterkenny Presbytery

Ja. Cochran

Belfast Presbytery.

Cha. Mastertoun

Ja. Stuart

Armagh Presbytery.

Geo. Lang

Gil. Kennedy

Ja. Moor

Ro. Gordon

Wm. Mackay

Antrim Presbytery.

Wm. Livingstone

Tim. White

Rob. McC. Master

Coham Presbytery.

Mat. Clarke

Hen. Niel

Sam. Dunlop late of Ath-

Rob. Macbride (lone,

Jo. Cochran

Fran. Ross

Rob. Knox

I do Understand that the greatest Number of Ministers, that is pretended to have Voted against me, is Thirty Five; I have only set down *Thirty Three*, because two of the Persons, at the calling of whose Names in the Roll, some Body in that Assembly Answer'd for the *Negative* of the Question against me, were gone before that Vote; I don't charge the *Party* with this NOTORIOUS CHEAT: But it may satisfy every one what a *Spirit* was raging against me, when such vile Practices cou'd be gone into, either by Concert, or by Persons out of their own Head. The two Ministers are the two Mr. Craford's in Belfast Presbytery, and have assur'd me, that they were not so much as in *Dungannon*, when the Vote of *Exclusion* pass'd, and that if any answer'd their Names on that Occasion (which I can Prove by Undeniable Evidence was done) it was without any *Commission* from them.

I can't find direct Evidence whether Mr. Wm. Boyd, one of the *Managers*, Voted or not. But I must do him that Justice to own that if he was in the House 'tis probable he did. Because he was the Man that *Dictated* to the Clerk the very Words in which the Question was afterwards put and carried against me. For which Reason I have plac'd him in neither List; nor the Moderator of the Synod, Mr. Ja. Tate, because he had no Occasion to give any Vote.

I am not sure but some of the *Thirty Three* in the above List may have been abus'd in the same way, with the two Mr. Craford's But I have not been able to detect this VILLANY in any more Instances: And if any others have been wrong'd in this Manner, upon Intimation from them, I shall take care to do them Justice in the most public way.

THE

THE first General Observation I beg Leave to make upon this Extraordinary Tryal and the Consequences of it, and which ought to be Seriously Weigh'd by all who have not engag'd 'emselves so far in Party as to sacrifice the interest of Truth to the service of their Cause, is, that little Regard is due to the Reports of common Fame. And how Mischievous and Wicked a thing it is, to be forward in believing or active in spreading 'em. Every age and every dispute has afforded fresh occasion to strengthen the first Part of this Remark; every one, in his own Case, is easily sensible and ready enough to complain of it. But the misery of it is, that Few very few have either presence of Mind, or disposition to apply it aright; when the Man who is mark'd out for popular Clamor and Reproach, happens to be of different Sentiments, and not of the same Side with 'emselves: Scarce has there been an Instance of any kind, where Falsehood and Slander have had a more Unbounded License given 'em by all Sorts, especially of our own Denomination, than in this very Affair which I now leave in Judgement with the World. And to convince even my bitterest Enemies of this I need only desire 'em to compare the different Representations they heard of it from several Hands, with what I Publish as undoubted matter of Fact, and pawn all my Reputation, that which nothing is more valuable in this World to make the Truth of every Fact, I have here Represented fully appear against all that Malice, and the arts of coloring Falsehood with the appearance of Truth can suggest; if there was any shadow of pretence to report that I was

deposed for being an *ARIAN*, or even Ground
 left to suspect me of that *dangerous Error*, me-
 thinks, I may submit to the candor of every cap-
 able Reader, and even to the cooler thoughts,
 and Reflections of the Party, who have hitherto
 acted, as if they found their advantage in giv-
 ing Credit to such barefac'd Calumnies and Lies.
 And by the same Rule all the other frightful Sto-
 ries such as *my turning Heathen, being Distracted, and*
having put Hand in myself, with all the fry of lesser
 Calumnies, such as *my Conforming to the Church, be-*
ing Independent in Principle and no Presbyterian, with
innumerable others, as contradictory, will be Regard-
 ed by unprejudic'd Persons, as no other than
 the Ecchos of Party Rage, and the last Refuge
 of Men, who wou'd fain Justify a shameful
 Cause.

IN other Instances when the occasion was not
 so pressing there was some kind of Discretion us'd,
 such forgeries were only whisper'd among Friends;
 and if any blab'd 'em out, they were soon dis-
 courag'd and represented as the effects of Passion
 and Weakness : And being thus disown'd in Pub-
 lick, they at once disappear'd, and like the Pesti-
 lence, walk'd about in their former Darkness. But
 this is an extraordinary Emergency. A Tryal has
 been carried on with uncommon warmth and
 severity, new Measures have been taken, and a
 very singular way of Issuing it has been gone in-
 to : they had Reason indeed to suppose, unless they
 wou'd show the Cause was such, as call'd for all
 that Rigor, and the Crimes of so high a Nature,
 to warrant their going out of the ordinary way
 of Discipline, the World wou'd quickly see thro'
 such Proceedings, if the plain undisguised state
 of the Case were set in a proper Light : It is
 I i very

very obvious, where the blame of all this Noise and Work, and all the Reproach that has arise from it to the *Dissenting Interest*, must fall. Every one can easily see, if the naked Truth were told that the whole Accusation Rested on this, that Member of the Synod had in private Conversation said, *the Jews were not to be punished as Blasphemers for Denying Christ to be God*, and that when he was under Prosecution for having meant more than his words cou'd in any fair Construction bear, *He refus'd to purge himself of a particular Error* because he had a **CONSCIENTIOUS** Scruple against submitting to such *Inquisitory Methods*, wou'd be next to impossible to Vindicate the *Conduct and Sentence* of the Synod. Such a Representation of the Affair then was necessary, in their Part, as wou'd fire Men's Tempers with that degree of Zeal, that wou'd look upon the established Rules of Proceeding and even the plainest Maxims of Justice, a cheap Sacrifice for serving such a *Glorious Cause*: It was well known that when ever a cry of *Heresy* was rais'd, and the danger of *Notions*, which the Country were sufficiently Allarm'd against, was struck into Men's Minds, no manner of Fault wou'd be found with their new *Claim of Power*, or with their devising and inflicting a *Censure* unknown to the Gospel or any Presbyterian Church before. With this view, all the odious Characters, which *Party Spirit and Revenge* cou'd think of, have been openly fix'd on me. The usual arts of spreading Slander by dark hints and strong Fears and Jealousies are too feeble to serve the present Purpose. The Charge must be direct and particular, and Calumny must not be let loose to waste at Noon-day, *that Thousand may*

carried

carried away with it on one Side and ten Thousand
on the Right Hand.

If any thing cou'd disabuse such as have been
thus impos'd on and recover 'em from their un-
happy *Credulity*, this *Narrative* I hope may do it,
and secure eve y one from giving Credit to, or
having any hand in *Countenancing* Calumnious Re-
ports, that have no other support than *Party Zeal*
and *Artifice*, when from such unexceptionable Evi-
dence it is plain, the very appearances of Truth
are not Regarded at all, and matters are come to
that pass, that a Man is thought only a Trimmer,
who do's not propagate a certain collection of
Stories, and who will not upon all occasions speak
Evil of a certain Set of Men, this in all Reason
is enough to put every one so much on their
Guard, that such Lies will only be discharg'd in
the Air, and begin to hurt no Body.

It may indeed be thought vanity to Imagine,
that this and many more Instances wou'd cure
Men of this mischievous Folly and Weakness, in
giving so readily in to a Lie, when it is become
the Voice of their Party. It is in some respects so
Natural to Men to be pleas'd with the Blemishes
that are cast upon others, that one might as well
hope to persuade the Thirsty Earth, not to drink
up the Rain, as to prevail on every one not to be
led about by the Ears with every idle Story, that
carries Scandal and Reflection in it.

BUT sure in a Case, which nearly affects the
very vitals of Religion, one might Imagine, that
it were no hard Matter to engage any, who have
the fear of God before their Eyes, to have no active
Hand in spreading Reports, which wound the
Characters of fellow Christians. For this is con-

trary to the Royal Law of Love, and not doing to others, as they wou'd have 'em do unto them, and so is directly Sinful. And it will not remove the Guilt of this Injurious practice, that they don't certainly know the Reports to be false and groundless. For to make one a true Speaker, it is necessary he know the Truth of what he Affirms : Nay, were it never so True, yet if he know it not to be so, its Truth will not secure him from being a Slanderer. How much more must all be so, who are like Wax, always in a readiness to Receive any new Impression, and without any more ado positively and confidently Affirm the Truth of all they hear to the prejudice of such as differ from 'em, and so act up to the Character of those Mentioned by the Prophet, Jer. 20. 10 Report and we will Report ! And if any thing will persuade Men, what a grievous Sin this is, it must be to consider, ' That thus they become greater advancers of Defamatory Designs, than the very first contrivers : For these upon a Consciousness of their Falsehood, are obliged to proceed Cautiously to pick out the Credulous and least discerning Persons, on whom to impose their fictions, and dare not produce 'em in all Companies for fear of Detection, but these in confidence that the Untruth. (if it be one) lies not at their Door, Publish it without any restraint in all places, at all times : And what the others are fain to Whisper, they Proclaim : Like the Engine, which was contriv'd to Convey a Whisper many Miles off. So that as in the Case of Stealing it is Proverbially said, If there were no Resters, there wou'd be no Thieves : So in this of Slander, if there were fewer Spreaders, there wou'd be fewer Forgers of calumnious Reports. The Manufacture wou'd be discourag'd, if there were not so many Retailers to put off the Wares.

It has been justly observed on the like occasion, 'that Men are apt to think the Guilt of Lie and consequently the punishment may be very much Diminished, if not wholly worn out, by the Multitudes of these who partake in it. Though the Weight of a Falsehood may be too heavy for one to bear, it grows light in their Imaginations, when it is shared among many. But in this Case a Man very much Deserves himself, Guilt when it spreads thro' Numbers, is not so properly divided as Multiplied: Every one is criminal in proportion to the Offence which he commits, not to the Number of those, who are his companions in it. Both the Crime and the Penalty lies as heavy upon every Individual of an Offending Multitude, as they wou'd upon any single Person, had none shared with him in the Offence. In a Word the Division of Guilt is like that of Matter: Tho' it may be separated into infinite portions, every Portion shall have the whole Essence of Matter in it, and consist of many parts, as the whole did before it was Divided.

AND alas! what a diffusive Guilt must lye upon many by the Party-lies which have been so industriously propagated, ever since our Debates began! and what a vast addition has been made thereto by this particular Affair of mine! Men may make Light of this now, and despise the most serious Warning of the Evil and Mischievous consequence of this prevailing Sin. But they shou'd remember that verily there is a God that dwells in the Earth; and in the Sense of the Apostle this is the Boldness and Injustice of Censuring and judging, it is invading a Character God hath reserved as his own Peculiar, *Ja: 4. 11, 12.* on whatever side it be practised. 'As for this usage we have met with, which for the honour of the Dis-

senting

'senting Interest I wou'd bury in silence if it were
 'possible, I can and do Heartily forgive it. But
 'whether others can forgive 'emselves, when they see
 'how far they have Injur'd me, I must leave between
 'God and their Consciences. But what is most aston-
 ishing of all is, the Unconscionable liberty Ma-
 nisters, not only the Imprudent, but even some of
 considerable Figure and Character, allow 'emselve
 in, viz. To bring their own Jealousies, and many
 Groundless Reports into the Pulpit; nay, to use the
 phrase of the excellent Bishop Burnet, to complain
 of these Matters in their Prayers to God. 'If
 'of my Brethren can think this for the Service and Gl
 'ry of Religion, I can patiently bear all their Reflect
 'ons. But if I know my own Heart, I wou'd not
 'all the disadvantages I can sustain, treat my
 'terest Enemy in such a Manner. And I thank God
 'I can safely appeal to my own practice in this Case.
 'I have never set any Men such an Example. If
 'for my sake, then yet surely for the sake of our Comm
 'Master, of our Common Christianity, of the Noncon-
 forming Cause itself, Men shou'd be asham'd of so
 an Immorality, & so great a Scandal. And if such Pa-
 'ty Affairs must be drag'd into every Discour
 it must in time make all sensible People among
 grow Sick of such Entertainment. And if upon
 the most serious occasions, even Exhortations at
 Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, the
 most Groundless Fancies and grossest Misrepresen-
 tations, must fill up the Room of and Justle
 the moving and Glorious Subjects, which Perf
 shou'd then have their thoughts upon; this, if
 stop be put to it, must like Eli's Sons, make
 abhor the Offering of the Lord.

But this puts me in mind of another Gene-
 Observation I wou'd make upon these rare Pre-
 ceeding

ceedings, that from them we may discover the *Mischief and Evil of intemperate Zeal*. I am willing to put the most favorable state of the Case, and admit, that all the violence and injurious Treatment given me during the course of the Tryal, nay, the *hard and cruel Censure* they Inflicted was not from any ill will to myself, nor from any view to cast a Sur upon the whole NONSUBSCRIBERS; but really from a good Meaning, and that they had a *Zeal for God in what they did, though not according to Knowledge*. Yet this will not Justify the severity of their *new Discipline*. For tho' the dictates of a Man's Conscience under a mistake be the immediate Rule of his Actions, and he cannot counteract 'em without very grievous and horrible Sin, yet his opinion does not alter *the Nature of things*. Moral Good and Evil are fix'd in their own condition and Essence, and all the superadded Duties of the Gospel in the Determination of the will of Christ. Every Man's Conscience, it is certain, *then is the Candle of the Lord within him*: But it lies upon every Man to take good heed, at what Fire that Candle is Lighted: That the Directions Issuing from it be pure, and taken from the Word of God, and not from the prejudices of his own Mind, and the heat of a strong or Enthusiastic Imagination. For the want of this care is the very Reason that so many People are misled, and run into such wild Extravagancies upon pretence of Zeal and great concern for the Truths of Religion. And will not this very Instance warn all to take due care, when they mean Right, also to understand and Judge Right? For otherwise their Zeal may soon lead 'em into very shameful Measures: *A thing impossible to be avoided, when things*

things are not consider'd fairly, all Heats or Animosity, Inclinations or Interests, Resentments and respect to Persons apart. And how much this was done in the Proceedings I complain of, The Narrative of 'em must, by this time, have convinc'd every prejudic'd Reader.

Now the letting 'em selves be Misguided, contrary to such plain Rules of Justice cannot escape great blame. Because however Men may happen to think differently about the *prudential Methods of securing Truth and Orthodoxy, and the length Christians may go in abridging 'em selves of their Liberty for preserving Peace, and easing the Consciences of weaker Brethren*; yet it is so exceeding Evident, that to Censure a Man before Conviction, to strain Words contrary to his declared Sense of 'em, to plead for Force in matters of Conscience, to require him in the most Solemn Manner to comply with a Demand which upon the most deliberate Enquiry appear'd directly Sinful to him, and to set up a proper and formal Inquisition under a Penalty of a high Nature, never known among us before, are Methods so gross that Men must have quench'd a great deal of their Natural Light, and consider the Scriptures with a very strange byass on their Minds, who cou'd turn their thoughts to the practice and justification of such Proceedings, upon any the most plausible Pretence whatsoever.

I know my Brethren, who acted all this by the strong Impulse of Zeal, will say they have done no Wickedness. But I must be free to tell 'em, however they may judge of their own Actings, the Nature of them is manifest and unalterable. **CALUMNY AND PERSECUTION,** and dreadful Sins, and no Zeal for God and Religion.

an excuse 'em. How much of the first has fallen to my Share even from their Hands, has been consider'd in the preceeding Observation, and if our Saviour's Judgment may be taken in the Case, their Sentence is plainly parallel to what he reckons a considerable Branch of Persecution, *Jo: 16. they shall put you out of the Synagogues.* How mischievous then must that Zeal be, which carries Men quite away from the first and highest Principles of Charity and Justice?

BUT if there were no other bad Effects of an intemperate Zeal, than the Blindness and Ignorance it covers men's Minds with, this itself might make every one sensible of the *Mischief and Evil* of it. And what can be a more astonishing proof of its Influence over Men's Judgment and Reason, than the strange Idea which the men I have to do with, have form'd to 'emelves of *Persecution*; for nothing with them, must pass under that odious Name, but *Fines, Imprisonment, Banishment, or Death*; it must always be some *Evil* affecting *Estate or Person*; but their *mild Censures* must never be esteem'd any Degree of *Persecution*. So that being depriv'd of a valuable Branch of the Ministerial Office, being mark'd out for popular Fury and Imprecations, being brought under the Suspicion of Heresy, and having the due Circulation of Justice entirely stop'd, have so much of the Charity of using the Rod of Discipline for the Good of a suppos'd Offender, that they can never without the grossest Partiality and Uncharitableness be brought under the frightful Notion of *Persecution*. But by their good Leave, however much they may be offended at it, I can give their Usage of me no other Name. For if being put under an Incapacity, or any kind of *Negative Disfranchisement*, be a real Evil and Inconveniency, the

suffering of it, must be strictly and properly a *Punishment*. And if therefore *Punishment* be *Punishment*, tho' it come short of the *Discipline* of personal or worldly *Damage*, 'tis as certain that *Punishment* for *Conscience* sake, is truly *Persecution*. Nay what is more astonishing, if my people had been as giddy as others, and taken the watchword from them, and quite dismiss'd me at once, the *Loss* of my *Usefulness* to them, and *their Usefulness to me* had been no Sort of *Persecution* neither, when it was fairly expected before hand, is much wonder'd at, that it did not necessarily follow, and some are yet tampering under hand to bring it about. If it were done, supposing it really unjust, the *Synod* can't be chargeable with it, it's not their *Act*. But I doubt not some are even *hardy* enough to maintain, there wou'd be no *Injustice* in it, nor the least *Ground* to complain of *Persecution*, if I were by the immediate *Effects* of their *Sentence* oblig'd to *leave my Native Land* and seek some place of *Rest and Retirement* out of their *Reach*. And what can give the *World*, a more affecting *Representation* of the *Danger* and *Wickedness* of *Party Zeal*, than to see men thus bringing their *Interests*, their *private little Views*, and their other *Prepossessions* along with them, and then accommodating *Matters* so, as to make the *Laws* of *God* stoop and bend to their *Humors*, while they don't see it. These in the false *Light* of their *flaming Zeal*, are to them like first self evident *Principles*, and all things else appear true or false, just or unjust, in *Proportion*, as they agree or disagree therewith.

BUT this leads to the *Observation*, with which I intend to conclude. That by these *Proceedings* we may be convinc'd of the *tender Care*, and

the infinite Wisdom of the great Head and Lawgiver of the Church in reserving to himself the sole Right and Authority of Legislation in his own Kingdom, and of binding the Consciences of his Subjects. A Truth which is generally own'd by Protestants of every Denomination, when they are arguing against the Exorbitant claims of the Papal See. But it is plain, too many drop it quite out of their Sight, when they come to Defend their own Constitution, and describe the Power they assume to themselves. But above all, Dissenters are full of this, when they complain of the Impositions in the Establish'd Church. Then, the Word of God is a Positive, and not only a Negative Rule. 'Tis not enough that a thing is not expressly forbidden here, to make it Lawful; but if it be'n't particularly enjoyn'd it is only Will-worship, a charging the Word of God with Insufficiency and Imperfection, to suppose that all that is fit or Decent in the Worship of God is not fully prescrib'd there. To make that necessary which Christ has left Indifferent is invading the prerogative of Christ, and to Exclude out of the Church, whom Christ will Receive, is the height of Arrogance and Presumption. But when these MAXIMS are applied to the Discipline and Government of the Church among 'EMSELVES, and they are pleaded against all Exclusive Tests and Terms of Ministerial Communion of Men's Devising, they are roundly argued against, and condemn'd by some, as opening a Door to let all Errors and Heresies into the Church. And thus, in their turn in spite of their own Principles, they set up for Power of making Laws, if things requir'd to be done under a Penalty may be Term'd so. But however some in Fact may contradict this great and comfortable Truth, yet upon a

closer View, nothing will appear a greater Blessing to the Church of Christ, than that our CONSCIENCES are not subjected to MEN considering that *Passions, Humors, and Liableness of Prejudices and Errors*, are common to Men of whatever Rank or Station. A Pretence to *Infallibility* is disclaim'd by all, but the *Papists*; and then there is no other way left, to determine Truths, but by the Weight of *Argument and Reason*. But the Difficulty is to discover on which side of the Question that lies. We are told, that to leave every Man to make his best Use of the Bible and judge for himself, wou'd necessarily occasion endless *Schisms, and innumerable Sects*; and that therefore the wisest and happiest Expedient, is, to refer all Points in Debate to *Assemblies of Learned and Pious Men*. And pray what does this amount to; but that after such an *Assembly* have argued the matter fully, and if they are not perfectly unanimous in the Case under Consideration, the Votes of the Majority must have the Force and Virtue of a *General Decree*, and the smaller Number must acquiesce. This is the *Scheme* upon which some men build the Peace of the Church, and they cry it up mightily, when they have a Party strong enough to carry what they believe and propose. But 'tis loaded with so many Absurdities, and so contradictory to the main Principles of *Protestantism*, that it may look like an Affront to the common Sense of Mankind, to attempt a particular Confutation of it.

THE chief thing which deceives any into a good Liking of it, is this, that they fancy since there is a *Power and Government* in the Church, there is some Regard due to her Decisions, and that there is no other possible way to prevent Confusion

tion : If the Voices of the *Majority* did not con-
 cede the rest, as is plain in the Case of civil So-
 cieties. The Misery of it is, that men will be
 always setting up the *Kingdoms of this World* as the
 Model of that *Kingdom which is not of this World*,
 and drawing their Rules and Precedents from 'em.
 'Tis true indeed in the Administration of States
 and Kingdoms, this method of determining mat-
 ters by *Suffrages* has been found the most proper ;
 and without submitting to it, there wou'd be nei-
 ther Peace nor Comfort in 'em. Not because
 there is any Necessity of this by the Appointment
 of Nature, nor because it is free from all Manner
 of Inconveniency ; but because there is hardly pos-
 sible any other Means of transacting Business a-
 mong Numbers, and that it holds good for the
 most part.

BUT it were idle and extremely ridiculous to
 pretend, that in like Manner the great *Truths of*
Religion, and *Matters of CONSCIENCE* are to
 be left to the uncertain Fate of a *Vote*, and to be
 settled by *Numbers* ; and that the smaller *Party*
 are to resign their Understaddings, and yield up
 their *Consciences* to the Direction of their Brethren ;
 'T was pretty surprizing to hear some Reverend
Fathers in the Synod, particularly the only two of
 my own *Presbytery*, who voted against me, round-
 ly asserting and pleading for this in the most pub-
 lick Manner. But let any consider, that if an As-
 sembly of 300 *Godly Divines*, as they argued,
 are to be submitted to against a *man's Judgment*
 and *Conviction* ; then much more shou'd an *Oecume-
 nical Council* consisting of a vastly greater Number
 be regarded as the *Arbiters* of all the Differences
 among Christians ; and how much *Truth* wou'd
 be in Danger by such a *Project*, will be obvious

to all who consider, that a very few of *all the Divines* in Christendom will be allow'd by any *Party*, except the *Papists*, to be in the Right.

To be sure then, *Truth and Error* are not to stand or fall by the *POLL* ; otherwise *REAL ORTHODOXY* might be in some Danger. And if the present *Trial* does not afford sufficient Evidence of this, when men appear'd so eager to pronounce a Proposition supported by plain Demonstration, *offensive and sounding harsh in pious Ears*, nay, downright false and injurious to *Magistracy* as it is the Ordinance of God ; when a direct *Inquisition* is establish'd by a Majority of those that were present, and such a Censure inflicted, as brands all *Presbyterian Churches* with being Deficient in an *Essential and Fundamental Part* of Government, I can freely appeal to *Protestants* of all Sorts. So that what a Majority shall enact among us, will be rejected by the Majority of other Churches with great *INDIGNATION* ; and what by Numbers is now hoisted into a Place among the necessary *Qualifications of Ministerial Communion*, will be censur'd by a Majority in other parts, as a plain *Infraction of Christian Liberty*, and the most *Essential Rules of Justice*.

How happy is it for Christians then, that their Faith is not to stand in Men, otherwise their Principles must vary as they change their Climate ; nay perhaps as the humours and fits of Mens Zeal do come and go. For in one Synod, it shall be acquiesc'd in as contrary to the *Maxims of NATURAL JUSTICE* to put any Man under a Judicial Enquiry as a *WITNESS* for or against HIMSELF upon an *ACCUSATION*, and he counted a high *SCANDAL* to alledge the Synod was pretending to do *SUCH A THING*. But at the Distance of one Synod

rod more ; such a DEMAND shall be made in
 the grossest Manner, and instead of being a Re-
 vouch is made a FUNDAMENTAL of the
 Constitution. So precarious then must Truth and
 Orthodoxy be, if the opinion of a Majority be the
 Standard by which it must be Tried, and Christi-
 ans be henceforth meer Children toss'd to and fro
 and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine; And
 it is certain that it ever has been so, and can
 be no otherwise if a Majority must have a Do-
 minion over our Faith ; for as there have been
 Councils against Councils, a Consent of Father's
 of one age against a consent of Fathers of another
 age, the Church of one age against the Church of a-
 nother ' and here we see the same Church against
 HERSELF and Sister Churches of the same age ; nay,
 Majority DROPPING in the Morning, what
 they were Eager for over Night. And so it will
 be in ALL AGES yet to come, while Men
 are Men, continue fallible and subject to Passi-
 ons, and are influenc'd by Party and other views,
 more than the Love of Truth.

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